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Flowers

AND

Flower Lore.

BY THE

REV. HILDERIC FRIEND, F.L.S.,

Author of "A Glossary of Devonshire Plant Names," "The Willow Pattern," etc.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS, INDEX, AND NOTES.

VOL. I.

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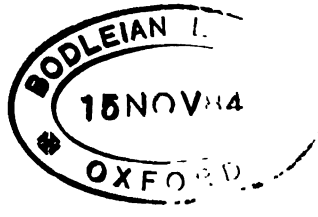
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A PROOF OF GRATITUDE,

AND IN ADMIRATION OF HIS PROFOUND ERUDITION,

THIS BOOK IS

Dedicated

(BY KIND PERMISSION)

TO

F. MAX MÜLLER, M.A.,

PROFESSOR OF COMPARATIVE PHILOLOGY AT OXFORD; FOREIGN MEMBER

OF THE FRENCH INSTITUTE, ETC., ETC., ETC.

PREFACE.

I VENTURE to think that the Title of the present volume will sufficiently indicate its scope, while the Introduction and Notes will supply such other information as may be required for the intelligent study of Flower Lore. It is therefore quite unnecessary for me to write a long preface, especially as I have taken pains to acknowledge my obligations to former writers by giving their names and the titles of their works whenever I have been indebted to them. I have every reason to hope that as great care has been taken in the preparation and revision of this work, it may give pleasure and satisfaction to such as, either from the love of Natural History or of Folk Lore, shall make it their study.

HILDERIC FRIEND.

BRACKLEY, *November 6th*, 1883.

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INTRODUCTION.

FLOWERS are the friends of all, and we look with amazement at the person who cannot find some amount of pleasure in their study. Children love to gather them as they take their country rambles or return from the village school; the sick are always delighted when a bouquet is brought into the chamber of suffering; mothers love to place them on table and in vase both for the sake of their beauty and their fragrance; the wealthy spend fortunes on conservatories and greenhouses; while the peasant cottager feels that something is wanting if he has not a few pots in his window or a border in his garden set apart for their cultivation. Here we are concerned, not with the cultivation of plants and flowers, but with their history and names, with the curious uses to which they have been applied, and the legends which cluster around them,—in fact, with anything that legend, poetry, fancy, or imagination can supply of interest in connection therewith. But though the present work covers a great deal of ground, it does not by any means claim to be exhaustive. Since the author commenced his work other labourers have announced the preparation of books bearing on the same subject, yet there is little need to fear that the works of Messrs. Dyer, Britten, and others will cover exactly the same field, or say all that might be said on so interesting a theme. Very little has been said about Oriental Flower-lore, as I hope in a short time to finish the arrangement of matter collected during my residence in the East, with a view to the publication of a companion

volume to the present. Since the MS. of the present book was completed, eighteen months ago, I have given constant attention to the study of flower-lore, my visits to various parts of the country having afforded me many opportunities for gleaning information at first-hand from the humble cottagers living in out-of-the-way districts, as well as from persons whose studies lead them into these fields of exploration. I have thought it would be interesting, therefore, to notice, in this brief Introduction, a few matters which have either been omitted altogether in the following chapters, or which have received but scanty attention.

First, then, in reference to books. My work has throughout been performed away from reference libraries, and I have been obliged to fall back on my own small supply of books, and on the rustic population met with in Kent, Sussex, Devon, Somerset, Oxon, Bucks, Northants, and other parts of England. This has proved both an evil and a boon. I find it far more interesting to glean information direct from the people than it is to repeat it from books, and so whatever I have been able to gather up in this way will have the advantage of freshness and originality. But, on the other hand, when facts need careful verification, and statements need authentication, it is sometimes a great convenience to have all the best authorities at hand, that their aid may be called in. I have, in the absence of a public library, formed a considerable collection of works on plant-lore, and to these the reader will find constant reference made. But some valuable books were either unknown to me when my various chapters were being written, or have appeared since they were completed, and so have not been mentioned either in the body of the work or in the notes which accompany each chapter. The most valuable of these is the second volume of the "Mythologie des Plantes," by Mons. A. de Gubernatis, the first volume of whose work appeared in 1878. But since this indispensable work treats chiefly of Indian, Greek, and Romance plant-lore, it would have been impossible for me to have used it largely in the present volume had the second part

been published before I finished my own. While I have referred more than once to a work on the "Plant-Lore of Shakespeare," by the Rev. H. N. Ellacombe, I have to remark that during the present year another book on this subject has appeared under the title of "The Shakspere Flora." Mr. Grindon has produced an interesting volume, and deserves the thanks of all students of Shakspere and of natural history for this useful work. "Flora Symbolica," by Mr. Ingram, is another of the new works which ought to be mentioned. It would have been specially helpful to me in writing the chapter on "The Language of Flowers" had it appeared in time. But the book which touches most nearly the subjects here treated is a volume published a few years since at Belfast under the title of "Flower-Lore." It was only after my own book had been completed, and the title of "Flower-Lore" chosen for it, that I became aware of the existence of this very useful publication. One fault mars most of these works, however, and that is the want of references and authorities. When the name of a writer of note is given no clue is supplied as to the particular volume or chapter whence the information is culled, and so we are unable to verify the quotations or go to the authorities without great difficulty. I had hoped to see Mr. Dyer's volume on the "Folklore of Plants," before writing this Introduction, but as the volume is not yet published I cannot speak of its merits; nor can I do more than mention the fact that Mr. Britten promises shortly to give us the result of many years study of this subject. It does not come into my programme to call attention to works treating purely of botany; nor must I enumerate those interesting volumes by such writers as Darwin, Lubbock, Grant Allen, and others which introduce us to the charming study of evolutionary phases of plant-life. I can only hope that the present volume may lead some to enter upon the study of flowers and plants in their widest relationships, when they will find these works of inestimable value.

Having supplied a Bibliography, as well as full critical and

bibliographical notes on each chapter, it is not necessary that I should dwell further on the subject of works for general reading or for reference, and I will therefore now turn to another matter—viz., that which concerns the collection of flower-lore from the mouths of the people. During my residenee in Devonshire I took great delight in studying the local names of wild and cultivated flowers and plants. In collecting these and preparing them for publication, I soon found that the people had a great deal of information to communicate respecting their favourite plants, and as much of this was novel and interesting, I made careful note of everything I heard. While I have embodied a great deal of this information in the following pages, my note-books still contain many other facts and fancies of not less interest, some of which deserve to be placed on special record here. Thus, while the garland woven for the fairies is somewhat elaborate, it does not claim to be exhaustive. In Sussex and Kent—my own native and adopted counties—we find remnants of fairy influence in the names of places and plants which linger amongst us still. I have shown how Pixy and Puck have become confused, and how they sometimes appear as good, at other times as bad characters. So in these counties the same confusion in name seems apparent, for while the wild Geranium (*G. Robertianum*) is in some places claimed by Robin Hood, the seed vessel of this plant, noted for its sharp point, is known as Pook-needle, or the needle employed by the fairies, just as the Scandix is called Puck-needle in Hants. In Ireland again we hear of tufts of grass which bear the name of Hungry-grass, because it grows up where people have sat down to eat, and have left again without paying their respects to the fairies by leaving them some portion of the food. This will remind us of what has been said in the following pages about Cloutie's Croft and kindred subjects. The following recipe for obtaining a sight of the fairies was written about the year 1600, and will perhaps prove interesting in connection with "The Fairy Garland." The writer says: "We have a precious ungent, prepared according to the

receipt of a celebrated alchymist, which, applied to your visual orb, will enable you to behold without difficulty or danger the most potent fairy or spirit you may encounter. This is the form of the preparation:—R. A pint of sallet-oyle, and put it into a vial-glasse; but first wash it with rose-water and marygolde water; the flowers to be gathered towards the East. Wash it till the oyle becomes white; then put it into the glasse, and then put thereto the budds of hollyhocke, the flowers of marygolde, the flowers or toppess of wild thime, the budds of young hazle, and the thime must be gathered neare the side of a hill where fayries use to be; and take the grasse of a fayrie throne; then all these put into the oyle into the glasse; and sette it to dissolve three dayes in the sunne, and then keep it for thy use." It is worthy of note that while the curious, tangled, brush-like growth which one often sees on Rose-bushes is called Donnerbesen on the Continent, and Old-man's Beard in the West of England, it elsewhere bears the name of Elf-rod. Here again Puck, the Old Man, the Thunderer, and the Elf are brought into close connection. At Wrexham we find an old Oak-tree sometimes known as the Fairy Oak, but usually this tree is claimed by Thor, Jupiter, or Perun.

The association of Puck or the devil with plants is much more extensive than one would at first imagine. Nor is this the case in England or Europe alone. The Malays place thorns on the floor to keep out demons when a child is born; the Hindûs regard the Garlic and Ocymum as capable of expelling and even destroying evil monsters; while in China, if a person is troubled with evil spirits a trailing plant, known on account of its unpleasant smell as the Fowl-dung Creeper, is employed for purposes of exorcism. Among the names which pass current on the Continent we find the Datura or Thorn-Apple (*Stramonium*) called Herbe du diable and Pomme du diable. Among the Little Russians the Artemisia and Hemlock alike play their *rôle* in connection with diabolism.

Respecting the Virgin, I have recently found the country folk in one part of Oxfordshire retaining an interesting legend which

connects the name of her ladyship with the spotted Persicaria. It will be remembered that in consequence of the dark spot which marks the centre of every leaf belonging to this plant, popular tradition asserts that it grew beneath the cross, and received this distinction through the drops of blood which fell from the Saviour's wounds touching its leaves. The Oxonian, however, says that the Virgin was wont of old to use its leaves for the manufacture of a valuable ointment, but that on one occasion she sought it in vain. Finding it afterwards, when the need had passed away, she condemned it, and gave it the rank of an ordinary weed. This is expressed in the local rhyme :—

"She could not find in time of need,
And so she pinched it for a weed."

The mark on the leaf is the impress of the Virgin's finger, and the Persicaria is now the only weed that is not useful for something. In Bucks the White Lily (*L. candidum*) is dedicated to the Virgin under the name of Lady-lily, while in some parts of Prussia the Holy-grass (*Hierochloa*), which is held to be sacred, is consecrated to her. I may also mention that in addition to the names for the Foxglove given in the chapter on "The Virgin's Bower," the French call it *Doigts de la Vierge*. In the "Mythologie des Plantes" will be found a number of other facts respecting the flower-lore of the Virgin which cannot be here adduced. During a recent visit to the West of England, I found that the name of Virgin Mary's Nipple was applied by the people in some parts of Somerset to a certain plant noted for the milk-white sap which flows from it on being gathered. It is not a little curious that this plant, which belongs to the Spurge family, should in some places be consecrated to the devil, but so it is; and a number of other plants will be found to fall into similar categories.

I have not by any means exhausted the subject of "Bridal Wreaths and Bouquets" in Chapter IV. A Royal wedding has taken place in England since that chapter was written, and an opportunity was then afforded us of seeing what part flowers had to

play in the interesting ceremony. Speaking of the approaching marriage of Prince Leopold the papers published in April 1882 said :—"The dresses of the bridesmaids are of white moiré antique, trimmed with white satin, the head-dresses being composed of clusters of violets, primroses, and white heather blossoms, the *tout ensemble* being extremely tasteful in design." I have quoted in one chapter (p. 489) some lines from a lately deceased author, in which the name "Seven-years' Love" is mentioned as designating a common flower in the West of England. The Rev. H. Ellacombe has kindly informed me that he has often seen the country bridesmaids in Gloucestershire and other parts bringing the double-flowered Yarrow (*Achillea Ptarmica*) to the hymeneal altar under this very name, which certainly is most expressive.

Since the following pages were written, we have had an opportunity of seeing how flower-lore originates and grows, for we have recently added to our calendar, in connection with the late Lord Beaconsfield, a new festival, under the title of Primrose Day. "The future historian will probably not find it very easy to establish the connection between the memory of Lord Beaconsfield and the Primrose, or to say why the modest yellow flower should be accepted as the symbol of a political career, more bold, brilliant, and strange, perhaps, than any other of its time in England. But if the Primrose is to become symbolic, like the Plantagenista and the *Fleur de lis*, the Orange-lily, and various other plants and flowers, it must be admitted that its purpose was well served at the unveiling of his statue." So reads the *Daily News* of April 20th, 1883; and the information which the papers contained respecting Primrose Day and the ceremonies observed on the occasion leads us to believe that we shall have this day commemorated, as Royal Oak Day has been, for many years. Ladies will wear primroses in their head-dresses, and gentlemen sport them in button-holes, and wreaths will still be consecrated at the Earl's shrine, when our heads are laid in the dust, and when the real meaning of the custom is forgotten.

The custom of presenting bouquets to distinguished personages on every occasion of interest seems to be on the increase. If the Princess Beatrice happens to keep her birthday at Baveno the good people send flowers—*veri fiori Italiani*, as Her Majesty calls them—in honour of the occasion; if the Princess of Wales visits some provincial town, bouquets are the order of the day. Does a general land on his native shores after an exciting campaign, then flowers greet him, too. The pretty custom of sending wreaths for the coffins of deceased friends is also growing, and it is certainly a delicate, expressive, and touching method of paying tribute to their memory. The Queen and Royal Family have set us an example again and again in this matter, and it is an example which we have not been slow to imitate. By this I do not mean to say that the custom is new, or originated with ourselves, for I have proved the contrary in the following pages, but the life of the ancient custom, so far from dying out, seems to be reviving under the influence of kindlier feeling, cultivated taste, and fuller knowledge both of human nature and of the world of nature.

Respecting the notions which used to be entertained of the virtues of plants, I have quite recently come across two or three interesting illustrations. In Oxon and the neighbouring counties the pretty Shaking-grass (*Briza*) is called Quakers, from its constant quivering. Now on the Doctrine of Signatures, that which shakes is good for a shaking complaint, and as ague is not uncommon in some low-lying districts, the people maintain that if you keep Quakers in the house you will be free from the quaking complaint! This notion was common among the old folk, but is fast dying out, and I have only found people of over threescore years possessed of the idea. In Bucks it is not only maintained that the wife rules where Sage grows vigorously,—a notion elsewhere attached to the Rosemary,—but a farmer recently informed me that the same plant would thrive or decline as the master's business prospered or failed. He asserted that it was perfectly true, for at one time he was doing badly, and the Sage began to wither; but as

soon as the tide turned the plant began to thrive again. This curious association of plants with the weal and woe of individuals and nations is widespread, and while I have given various illustrations of it in the following chapters, I may here supply one other which has just come under my notice. It is said that one of the great treasures in the Hohenzollern Museum at Berlin is a fragment of wood from an ancient Pear-tree at the foot of the Unsterberg, near Salzburg, which, according to tradition, would blossom and bear so long as the German Empire flourished, but would die with the fall of the Imperial power. In 1806, when the Empire was dissolved, and the Confederation of the Rhine formed, the tree withered away, and the poet Chamisso alluded to the old legend in one of his poems. The tree remained lifeless for over sixty years, but in 1871, after the establishment of the new German Empire, the old trunk suddenly put forth branches, blossomed, and bore fruit.

As I have treated somewhat fully of the popular names of plants I must resist the temptation which here presents itself to dwell on some new names which have lately come under my notice. But I may be allowed to say that in treating of the history and etymology of words I have frequently quoted the opinions of others even when I have not been able to endorse them. I trust that the reader will carefully distinguish between the quotations made from other writers—such, for instance, as Dr. Prior—and the statements made by myself. Professor Max Müller, who has done me the honour of accepting the dedication of this volume, remarked, on reading some of the proof sheets, that he did not agree with all the derivations proposed. Neither do I; at the same time I have thought it right in some cases to place alternative etymologies before the reader, that he, too, may judge of their respective merits. Professor Skeat calls Dr. Prior a most unsafe guide in matters of etymology, and I pointed out, in my review of Mr. Grindon's "Shakspere Flora" in the *Academy*, that the "Popular Names of British Plants" must not be quoted as a final authority on many

important points. At the same time we have no other book which as yet fills the place, and while the reader may be placed on his guard, he may at the same time be assured that there is much ingenuity and learning displayed in Dr. Prior's interesting and useful work. If I have sometimes been led into error through relying too much upon his book, it has been for this reason; but I have more than once had to state that his etymologies were open to question. I may instance here in passing the words Marygold (p. 96), and Rose (p. 432); concerning which latter name Professor Max Müller writes: "You state that ῥόδον meant 'a red flower,' though you add that this is open to question. I had some years ago a dispute about it with Professor Wright of Cambridge, as you will see in the *Academy* for 1874, May 2nd and 23rd, and I think I proved that ῥόδον was an Aryan word, and meant originally no more than SPRIG, flower. Perhaps this might be mentioned." This kind reference enables me to point out the fact that I have in this case, as in many others, quoted words which I did not fully endorse; and I again request the reader to distinguish sharply between quotations from others, and *bonâ fide* statements of my own. Attention to this rule will be helpful alike to reader or critic and author.

A curious instance of the association of the Cross with plants has recently occurred to me, concerning which I have found no mention in the usual works on plant-lore. In Sussex, Kent, Bucks, and Northants I find it is still customary, when a cabbage is cut and the stalk left in the ground to produce greens, for the cottager to cut a X on the top of the upright stalk. I have inquired again and again why this is done, but the only answer I can get is to the effect that no greens will shoot out around the stalk if this mark is not inserted. That this is a piece of superstition every one may prove who is possessed of a piece of ground; but the idea seems to be this—that a cabbage stalk so marked is secure against the plant-demon, whose business it is to do injury to the gardens which are not carefully watched, and the plants

which are not protected by the sacred sign. From Thorpe's "Northern Mythology" (iii., 268) we learn that in the flax-fields of Flanders there grows a plant called the *Rood-selken*, the red spots of which on its bright green leaves betoken the blood which fell on it from the Cross, and which neither snow nor rain has ever since been able to wash off. This reference to blood-plants reminds us of what Dr. Seemann states respecting the flower-lore of St. John. "About Hanover" (he says) "I have often observed devout Roman Catholics going on the morning of St. John's Day to neighbouring sandhills, gathering on the roots of herbs a certain insect (*Coccus Polonica*) looking like drops of blood, and thought by them to be created on purpose to keep alive the remembrance of the foul murder of St. John the Baptist, and only to be met with on the morning of the day set apart for him by the Church." It will be remembered that the reddish-coloured sap to the Hypericum is called the blood of John the Baptist, just as the plant itself is consecrated to him under the name of St. John's Wort.

A great deal more might have been written about the connection which flowers and plants have with heraldic badges. As a favourite flower among our forefathers the Columbine found its way into heraldic blazonry. It occurs, for example, in the crest of the old Barons Grey of Vitten. In the bill presented by the painter in connection with the funeral ceremonies of Lord Grey we read: "Item, his creste with the favron, or, sette on a lefte-hande glove, argent, out thereof issuyinge caste over threade, a branche of Collobyns, blue, the stalk vert." In his "Coronary Herbs" Guillim also makes mention of the Columbine: "He beareth argent, a chevron sable, between three Columbines slipped proper, by the name of Hall, of Coventry. The Columbine is pleasing to the eye, as well in respect of the seemly (and not vulgar) shape, as in regard to the azury colour thereof, and is holden to be very medicinal." We are told of Opitz, a German poet, that he became a member of the "Order of the Palm-tree," while recently we read that the King of the Netherlands had conferred the "Order of the

Crown of Oak" on certain meritorious individuals. The Oak formed the badge of the Stewarts. As, however, it was not evergreen, the Highlanders regarded this as ominous of the fate of the royal house. The Fir formed the armorial ensign or crest of one of the clans, while Holly, Juniper, Pine, Heather, Mistletoe, and many other plants have found association with other Highland tribes. The town of Rheims is said to derive its name from the Buckthorn (*Rhamnus*, called *Reim* in old French), on which account two branches of that plant are intertwined as the arms of the town. The Broom was embroidered on the dress and worked into the jewels of the Plantagenet family, just as the Dragon is in China to day. In 1496 the Amsterdam Chamber of the Eglantine was founded, and took for its motto the words, *In Liefde Bloeyende*—"Blossoming in Love." Nearly a century after two of the literary guilds of Antwerp arrived at Amsterdam, bearing the titles of the Fig Tree and the White Lavender Bloom. Henceforth the Eglantine was known as the Old Chamber. The first wife of Henry VIII. of England, Katherine of Aragon, had the Pomegranate for her emblem. Members of "the Order of the Broom-flower, instituted by Saint Lewis the French king, did wear a collar composed of Broom husks, or codds, interlaced with Flowers de Lys. King Lewis chose this Broom for his emblem, adding these words, '*Exaltat humiles*,' intimating that God had exalted him for his humility to the Royal throne of France," says Ross. Another Lewis or Louis instituted "the Order of the Thistle, called also the Order of Burbon, in honour of the Virgin Mary, A.D. 1370. This consisted of six-and-twenty knights who wore a belt, in which was embroydered the word *Esperance;* it had a buckle of gold, at which hung a tuft like a Thistle," etc. Francis, Duke of Bretaigne, A.D. 1450, instituted the Order of the Ears of Corn, which was so called because the golden collar was made in the form of Ears of Corn, and "to signifie that Princes should be careful to preserve Husbandry." In 809 an Order was created whose collar was made up of Thistles and Rue, "the one being full of prickles, and not to

be touched without hurting the skin, the other is good against serpents and poyson." Ross, who supplies us with the foregoing information in his "View of all Religions in the World," 1696, adds that "The Order of the Lily or of Navarre was instituted by Prince Garcia, the sixth of that name, in the city of Nagera, A.D. 1048, where the image of the Virgin Mary issuing out of a Lily was discovered in the time of the King's sickness, who thereupon suddenly recovered his health; and in token of gratitude instituted the Order of Knights of St. Mary of the Lily, consisting of eight-and-thirty-knights whereof he was chief. Each of these weareth a Lily on his breast, made of silver, and a double chain of gold enterlaced with the Gothish letter M, which stands for Mary. At the end of the chain hangeth a Flower de luce, carrying the same letter crowned." Other orders have at various times been created, but these must suffice.

The Language of Flowers is a subject which is possessed of great charms for the fairer sex, but I have not dwelt on it so fully as some might have wished, seeing that more books have been written on this than on any other branch of Flower-lore. With the mere sentimental expression of ideas by a forced use of certain flowers, or by means of buds and leaves placed in certain positions, I have but little sympathy. On the other hand, there are many peculiarities connected with flowers—their colour, size, time of growth number, and period of decline—which may suggest to the thoughtful a variety of the most pleasing ideas. Thus in the Gulistan a wise man is asked how it is that of all the lofty trees which God has created, none is called *Azad*, or "free," except the Cypress, which bears no fruit. He replies that each has its appropriate produce and appointed season. In its season each is fresh and blooming, then it becomes dry and withered. But the Cypress, ever flourishing, knows none of this, and of the same nature are the *Azads*, or religious independents. In like manner the same tree, together with the Yew and Arbor Vitæ, has been regarded as symbolic of longevity, or of a life beyond the grave. Such

symbolism may prove very instructive, and has, in fact, in all ages and among all races had its peculiar use.

The custom of planting trees on special occasions seems to be growing. When Epping Forest was declared free for the use of Her Majesty's subjects for all time a tree was planted in the Queen's name to commemorate the event. Many trees were planted in various parts of the country when the Heir Apparent was married; and the Prince and Princess have on various occasions been called upon to show their skill at arboriculture since then. This year their Royal Highnesses visited St. Leonards to open the Alexandra Park, and a tree was then planted; while at Leicester the Princess planted a tree with a spade whose handle was of ivory, chastely ornamented with oak-leaves, and bearing the inscription, "May 29th, Royal Oak Day." Many other customs, some of them tracing their origin back to a dim antiquity, are still in vogue amongst us. The Russian papers recently announced that collections were being made at the Universities of that country to purchase a wreath with which to decorate the grave of Mr. Darwin in Westminster Abbey. I have called attention to this custom in the following pages and shown that it existed centuries ago in Greece and Rome. Another pretty custom is still regularly observed amongst us. A few days ago (November 5th) the colours of a victorious regiment were bedecked with Laurel, the victor's emblem, concerning which I have also written somewhat fully.

In Bucks, I find that the young people still make use of love-divination by means of the Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*) in very similar fashion to that described on page 289. The florets should all be stripped off, and the rest of the flower-head placed in the bosom. If, on being withdrawn, one of these spikes, of which three should be employed, is found to have grown, that one represents the true lover. A few other notices of living flower-lore from the borders of Oxon, Bucks, and Northants may here be given. Take the root of Mandrake, as Bryony is called, and give a small portion

to the horses in their food. It will make them sleek and improve their condition. Mandrake is still sold for medicinal and other purposes, and it is also believed that the plant takes the form of the human figure. This piece of folk-lore I find in Somersetshire also.

The stems of the Deadly Nightshade cut in small pieces, threaded, and worn as a necklace, will prevent teething fits in children. The same is said of the stem or branches of the common Elder, only the plant employed must by no means grow in its natural state, or it loses its influence. To be specially efficacious it should grow out of the decayed stump of a hollow tree, where birds have dropped the seed. To bring a sprig of Shepherd's Thyme, as wild Thyme is called, into the house is thought very unlucky, as by so doing you bring death or severe illness to some member of your family. My informant tells me that she was once charged with hastening the death of her own sister in this way, and as the neighbours and family more than once accused her of this great crime, it preyed upon her mind till it made her almost ill herself. The common Cinquefoil, or five-leaved grass (*Potentilla*), has a charm attached to it as a fortune-teller. Find a five-leaved grass with seven leaflets, and put it under your pillow. You will then dream of your lover, and the person about whom you dream "you surely will have, as sure as the dead man lies in his grave." Much the same is said of an Even-ash. Repeat the following lines :—

> "This Even-ash I double in three,
> The first man I meet my true love shall be ;
> If he be married let him pass by,
> But if he be single let him draw nigh."

Or say as follows :—

> "This Even-ash I carry in hand,
> The first I meet shall be my husband !
> If he be single then he may draw nigh,
> But if he be married then he may pass by."

The leaf must be thrown in the face of the person first met. In the place of the Tinker-tailor rhyme which is repeated when

counting the bents of Rye-grass, we have the following in use in the Midlands :—

> " Little house, big house, pig-sty, barn,
> Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief,
> Silk, satin, cotton, or wool,
> Black, white, red, or blue."

Such are a few of the lingering remnants of a past age of superstition, and I give them here, because they have not come under my notice in books, although we find the usual works on folklore teeming with exactly similar rhymes and sayings.

There are still many little matters which I had noted for treatment here, but my space is already exhausted, and I must close. I have to thank the publishers for the illustrations with which they have enlivened and beautified the pages of this book, but for the explanations which accompany them I am in no way responsible. I regret to find that in a few instances these explanations are faulty, but the reader will be able to rectify the mistakes by reading " stamens " instead of " anthers," and " pistil " instead of " stamen " in those cases where, as on page 224, the errors occur. Every effort has been made to ensure the greatest accuracy in identifying the various plants named, and by the aid of the copious Index which has been compiled, reference may be made to each of the scattered notices bearing on those flowers which one desires specially to study. I would also direct attention to the Additions and Corrections on page 698, where the reader will find references to some of the latest information respecting flower-lore. May the work prove both interesting and profitable !

PINKS.

1. Dianthus prolifer; 2. D. Armeria; 3. D. Carthusianorum; 4. D. superbus 5. D. deltoides; 6. D. cæsius; section of blossom; seeds.

CHAPTER I.

THE FAIRY GARLAND.

"Trib, trib, fairies: come: and remember your parts.
Fairies use flowers for their charactery."

SHAKSPERE.

IN "the good old times" people believed in the existence of fairies as firmly as they believed in their own. In the secluded villages of Fair Devonia, whence I write, you will still frequently meet with people whose faith in the "good folk" is as unshaken as ever. The heathery moors and verdant dales of Devon and Cornwall are not more romantic and attractive than are many of the tales which still pass current among the peasantry, respecting the fate of some pixy-led mortal —a traveller who has found himself at midnight trespassing in

Fairyland, and has been overcome by a spell which he could not break, until he had been led to dance with the pixies, or travel to some remote spot, where he would ultimately find himself after the magic influence had passed away. It is, however, but fair to say, that at least some of these romantic stories have a not very fairy-like foundation, for, under the influence of cider or some other kind of drink, a man will often be seen turning out of the village inn, late at night, too stupid to be able to direct his steps homeward, and if in the morning he is found lying on the village green, or clutching the brushwood by the stream, it may be needful for him to invent a story to account for his strange position; and it is in this way that many of the tales relating to pixy-led individuals in these and other parts have originated. But setting this sad corruption of the simple faith of our ancestors aside, there is something enchanting in the stories we were all familiar with in our youth, connected with the tiny fairy or elf. For the romance I must ask you to turn to other works in connection with this subject, or to the volumes to which reference is made in our bibliography: our present concern is not so much with fairy tales, as with the flowers and plants which are supposed to have a connection in some way or other with the mythic creatures that figure in them. Regarding fairies as "the fair ones" and as taking upon themselves miniature human forms, we shall be prepared to find that their name stands connected with flowers of delicate texture and fair complexion. Everyone knows the wild, rambling Stitchwort which clambers up our country hedgerows and peeps out between the prickly branches and delicate blossoms of hawthorn and brier. Children know the flowers under the more familiar names of Snappers, Snapjacks, or Allbones, but in Devonshire another name is familiar. We have said that people still believe in fairies here, but they know them by the name of Pixies or

Piskies. Now if you were to ask a lad in some parts of Devonshire the name of the Stitchwort, his ready answer would be, "Us calls en Pixies." Whether it is their delicate white form which has secured them their name, or a supposition that fairies are particularly fond of them, or whether it is because of their curious habit of popping out their heads between the dark leaves of the hedgerow, we cannot say; but the fact remains that the Stitchwort helps to form the Fairy Garland. This flower must not be gathered, or you will certainly be pixy-led.

Nor is this the only plant claimed by these tiny beings. In the northern counties of England there is a plant called Fairy Butter. It is what we call a Fungus, and receives its name from the supposition that it is made in the night, and scattered about by the fairies. This is a very different thing from the *fairies' butter* which we read of in connection with mines, and concerning which a friend thus writes:—"'The labourers in the mines have stories respecting *sprights of small people*, as they call them; and they used to say that when the damp rises up from the underground vaults, they heard strange noises, like people knocking and hammering. These damps render many lame, and kill others outright, without any visible hurt upon them.' Shakspere addresses the

"'Elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves;'

"and we may conclude that *fairy butter* was not known in his time, but was a later superstition. Pennant, however, mentions that there is a substance found at a great depth in crevices of limestone rocks in sinking for lead-ore, near Holywell in Flintshire, which is called *Menyn Tylna* (*Tylwyth*) *Teg*, or *fairies' butter*. This is a substance of nature's own churning, but it affords a proof how strongly the 'little people' have kept their hold on the imaginations of miners as well as others." [1]

Halliwell remarks that "although the fairies have nearly disappeared from our popular superstitions, a few curious traces of them may be found in provincial terms. Fairy Butter, a fungus excrescence sometimes found about the roots of old trees, or a species of *tremella* found on Furze and Broom. Fairy circles, Fairy rings, or Fairy dances, circles of coarse green grass often seen in meadows and downs, and attributed to the dancing of the fairies." These fairy rings are familiar to us all. It often happens that in the neighbourhood of these rings you may find large numbers of Mushrooms and Toadstools, which, together with their quick growth during a single night, would easily lead people to imagine that the fairies had something to do with their production. Although Shakspere does not mention Fairy Butter, it is easy to prove that the superstition respecting the connection of fairies and fungi existed in his time. The common Toadstool (*Marasmius oreades*) is in some places called Pixy-stool, and a broad species of fungus, probably the same as that called Fairy Butter in some parts, is in others known as Pixy-puff. In Shakspere's "Tempest" we find a reference to pixy-rings, and the superstition that the elves make Mushrooms:—

> "You demi-puppets that
> By moonshine do the green sour ringlets make,
> Whereof the ewe not bites, and you whose pastime
> Is to make midnight Mushrooms, that rejoice
> To hear the solemn curfew."[2]

In Pope's "Rape of the Lock" (I. 31), we read

> "Of airy elves, by moonlight shadows seen,
> The silver token and the circled green."

Only the other day it was related to me by a person living in Devonshire, that these rings were still believed by some to be caused by the fairies catching the colts found in the fields, and

riding them round and round. Michael Drayton, referring to these circles, says of the fairies:—

> "They in their courses make that round,
> In meadows and in marshes found,
> Of them so call'd the fairy ground."

And, once more, Browne, in his "Britannia's Pastorals" (1613-16) describes

> "A pleasant mead
> Where fairies often did their measures tread,
> Which in the meadows made such circles green,
> As if with garlands it had crownèd been.
> Within one of these rounds was to be seen
> A hillock rise, where oft the fairy-queen
> At twilight sat."

Mons. de Gubernatis has the following note on the German words: "Elfenkraut, Elfgras (*herbe des Elfes*).—When, on a clear night, under the lime-trees, the elves dance in a ring around the meadows, they trace there green circles, in which the plants which their aërial feet have touched will spring up with marvellous vigour. There is one of these, however, which in particular receives the name of Fairy-plant (*l'herbe des Elfes*)—viz., the *Vesleria cærulea*, which owes its name to its circular form."

One writer tells us that when the damsels of old gathered May-dew on the grass, which they made use of to improve their complexions, they left undisturbed such of it as they perceived on the fairy-rings, apprehensive that the fairies should in revenge destroy their beauty; nor was it reckoned safe to put the foot within the rings, lest they should be liable to fairies' power.

The fact that fairies are frequently spoken of as "the folk," "the little folk," or "the good folk," has led to an ingenious, but we believe false, interpretation of the name Foxglove. In the "Language of Flowers" (F. Warne & Co.) we read: "The Foxglove also holds a deadly poison in its exquisite cap-like cups.

It is a Fairy plant, as its true name proves—*i.e.*, Folks'-glove, not Foxglove. By the 'Folks,' or more commonly 'good folks,' our ancestors meant the fairies. The shape of the flower doubtless suggested the name. In France it is called, '*Gant de Nôtre Dame*,' or 'Our Lady's, the Virgin's, Glove.' We think, however, that the Irish name, 'Fairy Cap,' is more in accordance with its beautiful blossoms, lined as it is with such delicate point lace." Thus it appears that the Foxglove does really enter into the Fairy Garland, even if we do not admit that the name is a corruption of Folks'-glove. I shall not here enter into a discussion respecting the interpretation of the name just given, but it may be well, for the sake of guarding against error, to state that we find no record of such a word as Folks'-glove. In the Anglo-Saxon lists we find *Foxes glofa* and *Foxes glove*, but nothing which would lead us to suppose the word to be a corruption of Folks'-glove. Dr. Prior says that the name Foxglove is so inappropriate to the plant that many explanations of it have been attempted, by means of which it might be made to appear that it means something different from the glove of a

FOXGLOVE (*Digitalis purpurea*).
a, *b*, plant; *c*, corolla (in section); *d*, calyx and pistil; *e*, *f*, sections of fruit.

fox. Its Norwegian names, which teach us that the English syllable fox is not a corruption of folks, mean fox-bell and fox-music. Here we have a possible explanation of our own name, which may formerly have been *foxes-gleow*, or "fox-music." Gleow is connected with our word "glee," and has reference to a favourite instrument of earlier times—a ring of bells hung on an arched support, a tintinnabulum; which this plant, with its hanging bell-shaped flowers, so exactly resembles. Quite recently we have seen in nurseries and toy-shops bells of this description for the amusement of children, hanging exactly in the form of the flowers on the foxglove stem, and this explanation of the name is both ingenious and suggestive. We shall speak of this flower again.[3]

The delicate little Ground-flax or Mill-mountain is also a Fairy plant, being known on account of its tender form as Fairy-flax and Fairy-lint. In his "Wreck of the Hesperus" Longfellow uses the former of these terms, but probably in reference to another plant (*Linum perenne*):—

"Blue were her eyes as the Fairy-flax."

Let me here introduce a passage which is full of interest in connection with this subject, from a most enjoyable book, Mrs. Whitcombe's "Bygone Days in Devon and Cornwall":—"The pixies are said to have the power of assuming various shapes, but their dress, whether belonging to an aristocratic elf or one of less pretensions, is always green.[4] The fairies established their kingdom for a time in Devonshire; however, the pixies proclaimed war, and a terrible battle ensued. King Oberon was dethroned, and his antagonists declared the conquerors; but previous to the battle we may imagine the banquet took place of which Browne in his 'Britannia's Pastorals' gives so pretty a description:—

"'A little mushrome, that was now grown thinner,
By being one time shaven for the dinner,'

"served for a table. The dainty covering was of pure white rose-leaves; the trenchers of 'little silver spangles'; the salt, 'the small bone of a fishe's backe'; the bread, 'the milke-white kernells of the hazell-nut':—

"'The cupboard, suteable to all the rest,
Was, as the table, with like covring drest;
The ewre and bason were, as fitting well,
A perriwinckle and a cockle-shell;
The glasses, pure and thinner than we can
See from the sea-betroth'd Venetian,
Were all of ice, not made to overlast
One supper, and betwixt two Cowslipps cast.'

"And then we read of a little fairy, who, 'cladd in a sute of rush,' a 'monkeshood flower serving for a hatt,' and under a 'cloake of the spider's loome,' brought in the bottles—every bottle was a 'cherry-stone':—

"'To each a seed pearle servèd for a screwe,
And most of them were fill'd with early dewe;
Some choicer ones, as for the king most meet,
Held mel-dew, and the honey-suckles sweet.'

"The fairies had even their musicians, whose hautboys were of syves (*i.e.* chives):—

"'Excepting one, which pufte the player's face,
And was a chibole, serving for the base;
Then came the service. The first dishes were
In white broth boylde, a crammèd grasshopper;
A pismire roasted whole; five crayfish eggs;
The udder of a mouse; two hornett's leggs;
Insteed of olyves, cleanly pickl'd sloes;
Then of a batt were serv'd the petty-toes;
Three fleas in souse; a criquet from the bryne;
And of a dormouse, last, a lusty chyne.'

"Truly a very dainty banquet:—

> "'The first course thus serv'd in, next follow'd on
> The faierye nobles, ushering Oberon,
> Their mighty king, a prince of subtill powre,
> Cladd in a sute of speckled gilliflowre.
> His hatt, by some choice master in the trade,
> Was (like a helmet) of a lilly made.
> His ruffe, a daizyie, was soe neately trimme,
> As if, of purpose, it had growne for him.
> His points were of the lady-grasse, in streakes,
> And all were tagg'd, as fitt with titmouse beakes.
> His girdle, not three tymes as broade as thynne,
> Was of a little trout's selfe-spangled skinne.
> His bootes (for he was booted at that tyde)
> Were fittly made of halfe a squirrell's hyde;
> His cloake was of the velvett flowres, and lynde
> With flowre-de-lices of the choicest kinde.'"

A description of the concert then follows; but we have perhaps gleaned from the choice and racy poem enough to show that fairies in those days knew how to enjoy life, and could turn their Garland to good account. In her interesting Letters to Robert Southey, now published under the title of "The Borders of the Tamar and Tavy," Mrs. Bray tells some interesting Devonshire pixy stories, one of which relates to flowers, and admirably illustrates our present study. It runs as follows:—"Near a pixy-field in this neighbourhood, there lived on a time an old woman who possessed a cottage and a very pretty garden, wherein she cultivated a most beautiful bed of tulips. The pixies, it is traditionally averred, so delighted in this spot that they would carry their elfin babies thither, and sing them to rest. Often at the dead hour of the night a sweet lullaby was heard, and strains of the most melodious music would float in the air, that seemed to owe their origin to no other musicians than the beautiful tulips themselves: and whilst these delicate flowers waved their heads

to the evening breeze, it sometimes seemed as if they were marking time to their own singing. As soon as the elfin babies were lulled asleep by such melodies, the pixies would return to the neighbouring field, and there commence dancing, making those rings on the green, which showed, even to mortal eyes, what sort of gambols had occupied them during the night-season.

TULIP (*Tulipa Gesneriana*).
a, plant; *b*, pistil and anthers.

"At the first dawn of light the watchful pixies once more sought the tulips, and though still invisible could be heard kissing and caressing their babies. The tulips, thus favoured by a race of genii, retained their beauty much longer than any other flowers in the garden; whilst, though contrary to their nature, as the pixies breathed over them they became as fragrant as roses; and so delighted at all this was the old woman who possessed the garden that she never suffered a single tulip to be plucked from its stem.

"At length, however, she died; and the heir who succeeded her destroyed the enchanted flowers, and converted the spot into a Parsley bed—a circumstance which so disappointed and offended the pixies, that they caused it to wither away; and indeed for many years nothing would grow in the beds of the whole garden. But these sprites, though eager in resenting an injury, were, like

most warm spirits, equally capable of returning a benefit; and if they destroyed the product of the good old woman's garden, when it had fallen into unworthy hands, they tended the bed that wrapped her clay with affectionate solicitude. For they were heard lamenting and singing sweet dirges around her grave; nor did they neglect to pay this mournful tribute to her memory every night before the moon was at the full; for then their high solemnity of dancing, singing, and rejoicing took place, to hail the queen of the night on completing her silver circle in the skies. No human hand ever tended the grave of the poor old woman who had nurtured the tulip bed for the delight of these elfin creatures, but no rank weed was ever seen to grow upon it: the sod was ever green, and the prettiest flowers would spring up without sowing or planting, and so they continued to do till it was supposed the mortal body was reduced to its original dust."

This tale, among others, was gleaned from the chat of the simple folk which still retain those unsophisticated and interesting manners which have for so long a time distinguished the peasantry of the West of England.

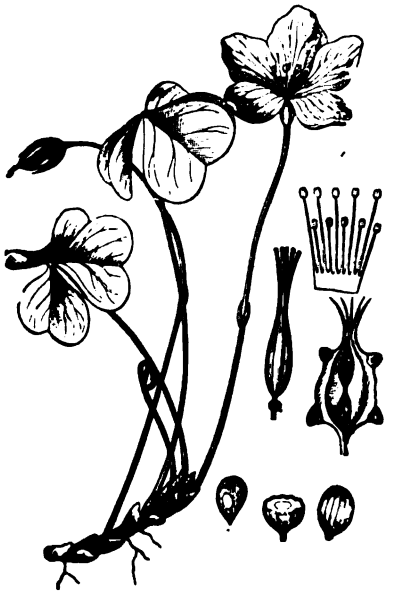
In many countries it is believed that mortals are transformed into fairies by eating of Ambrosia or some peculiar kind of herb.[5] When I was living in the East I once visited a celebrated spot, on which it was reputed that such a plant had grown in former times, and in connection with which my Chinese pandit told me the following legend. You will perhaps see the same tradition in other books at some future time, differing from the present account in some of its details; but I have copied the story from a translation which I made at the time when it was told me, and shall leave you to compare it with other versions when you may meet with them. The legend states that a certain Emperor of China was on one occasion taking a quiet walk on the hillsides

in the neighbourhood of his palace, when he unexpectedly came across two females of very different ages, one apparently very young, the other quite an old dame. He was startled, moreover, by observing that the young woman, as she appeared to be, was severely chastising the aged matron; and, puzzled to know how such a thing could happen in a land where reverence for the aged is one of the first lessons the young are taught, he demanded an explanation. The reply was that she who appeared as a youthful maiden was in reality the mother of the aged lady she was chastizing; that, in fact, the mother was correcting her daughter. His curiosity was thus still further excited, and he forthwith questioned them respecting the cause of the mother's youthful appearance. In reply they informed him that she had eaten of the plant which makes mortals into fairies or genii; in China called *Sín*, and derived from the words for man and mountain; perhaps because the elves were supposed to prefer mountain abodes.[6] The Emperor naturally inquired if the plant could still be obtained, and was told that such a thing was possible. After gleaning all the necessary information he departed, and forthwith despatched a faithful servant in search, telling him there were many difficulties in the way; but that if his mission were successful, he should be abundantly rewarded. The servant took ship, attended by a number of followers, and after a tedious voyage reached the neighbourhood in which the Ambrosia grew, and to his joy saw that the hill was covered with the plant he sought. He laid in a good supply, and made preparations for a speedy departure, that he might convey to his royal master the much-wished-for herb. On arising next morning, however, he found that the plant which he had gathered had withered: he therefore resolved to eat it himself, and search for more, whose roots should be better supplied with the nourishment required for keeping it fresh during the voyage home. But lo! when he went

in search the second time all had disappeared save one small plant, and that was down the side of a dangerous cliff. For the purpose of securing this one remaining root, none of his retinue would risk their lives; so the faithful servant himself went down, and as he went, suddenly his hold gave way and he fell, to all appearance a lifeless corpse, to the bottom of the rugged mountain, and was lost in the valley beneath. But just at that moment a large white bird, a stork, regarded among the Chinese as a symbol of immortality, was seen to rise on the wing and soar away. It was a messenger from the genii world, come to bear him away to enjoy the blessing he had sought for his lord. To this time the anniversary of the day is kept by the simple and devoted people, and large numbers annually flock to the hillside to bathe in the waters which ripple in the valley below, and so seek to be participators in his bliss. They also show you the traditional plant, but do not now claim for it any mysterious powers. It is only in Eastern lands that you can still feel the beating pulse of the old life which supports itself on legends like these; in England we have the fossil remains of the past, but the life is already almost extinct. A knowledge of such facts as these, however, will enable us in imagination to resuscitate the skeleton which is still our heritage, and picture to ourselves the kind of feelings and actions which made up so great a portion of the daily life and worship of our simple-minded ancestors.

I presume there is scarcely any boy or girl in England who does not know the Wood Sorrel. Sometimes it is called Bread-and-Cheese in country places, or Cuckoo's Meat. The plant is easily recognised in the spring-time by its three delicate leaflets on a rather long stalk, and by its lovely white flowers, which at first sight resemble those of the wood-anemone, except that they are smaller. These tiny white flowers, with their delicate purple

veins, are called by the Welsh Fairy-bells, and the people used to believe that the merry peals which call the elves to "moonlight dance and revelry," were sounded forth by these miniature bells. You will thus see that those mysterious beings are not destitute of that music which hath charms. It is curious here to notice that the idea of flower-music frequently comes out in the names of plants. We have already seen that the word Foxglove may have meant Fox-music, and now have learnt that in Wales the fairies have their bells; whilst in Ireland the Foxglove is also devoted to their use for musical entertainments, and called, as the Wood Sorrel is in Wales, Fairy-bell. Everyone again is familiar with the Harebell, and if the fox has music, why should not the hare? The name Campanula also has reference to bells, but is given to those plants whose flowers are bell-shaped, and does not refer to fairy music. The same may be said of Bluebell, where the colour and shape of the flower are the points indicated by the name. This connection between bells and flowers, which I have again referred to in the notes to this chapter, is also brought out in connection with the word Squill. In Italian (as Dr. Prior reminds us) the word *squilla* is now used to denote the small vesper-bell which is rung in the Campanili for evening service; but it is doubtful whether the plant was called by this name on



WOOD SORREL.

account of its likeness to a bell, as the word Harebell, which is applied to the Squill, would lead us to suppose; or whether the bell was called *squilla* on account of its resemblance to the flower. It is enough that we here see how easily people might come to regard fairies, and animals which are often connected with fairies, elves and witches, as possessed of bells and music in the shape of flowers.

HAREBELL.

Among the Danes a fairy is called Elle, and this seems to have been the source of some confusion respecting the names of plants. The Elecampane, for example, is known sometimes as Elf-wort and Elf-dock. The latter half of the second name applies to the broad leaves which characterize the plant; and possibly on account of the first syllables of Ele-campane being confused with the Danish Elle, the term Elf was employed to denote the kind of dock. Here the fairies seem to have come into possession of a plant by stratagem,—taking advantage of a similarity in the sound of words,—and so gaining another plant for their Garland, which by right was never intended for them. Perhaps

something similar to this will account for the Alder-tree being called Elletræ, Elle or Fairy-tree, where the original name of the Alder would be easily confused with the word for an elf or fairy.[7] It is a Danish belief that he who stands under an elder-bush at twelve o'clock on Midsummer eve will see the king of the elves go by with all his train.

It will naturally be asked by many who read these pages whether other people believe in fairies; and if so, whether they dedicate flowers to their use? We can reply that in this matter also the "whole world is kin"; and what one people believes and practises, others do also. To take one illustration, and that from a country where the people are generally regarded as doing everything as differently from ourselves as possible; I mean China. At the time of the Chinese New Year, which falls a month or six weeks later than our own, and is the greatest festival in the whole year, the people delight in decorating their houses, as we do at Christmas, with flowers and shrubs. The custom observed by us is originally the same as that observed by the "Heathen Chinee." Among the flowers which are in blossom at this season is one choicely-scented little Daffodil, with flowers about the size of a butter-cup, the whole plant often being no more than six inches high. The people go into the markets and buy these plants, carry them home, and place them in a shallow dish filled with pebbles and clean water. Here they grow after the fashion of hyacinths in English windows, and require very little attention after having been once planted. It is the pride of every cottager to have one of these flowers in full bloom at New Year's tide, and many of the children have plants of their own as well. And now for the name of this pretty little plant: it is called in Canton *Shui Sin Fá*, which means "Water-Fairy-Flower," so that we at once see the same connection between flowers and fairies in the East as we have at home. The foregoing remarks are the

result of my own observation in China itself; but since writing them I have come across the following passage in a valuable work on Botany, which will fully bear out what I have said. "The Chinese call this species of Narcissus (viz., *N. Tazetta*) *Shuey seen fa*, and it is used by them for religious purposes at the New Year. The bulbs are sent every year from Chinchew, being only kept at Canton during the time of their flowering. They are planted in pots made to retain water, filled with sand or small stones." I may add that the Balsam is in Canton called *Fung Sin Fá*, or "Phœnix-Fairy-Flower." These illustrations must suffice, as we should soon fill a volume if we allowed ourselves to ramble about among the luxuriant flowers and foliage of tropical climes.

I must now call attention to some more of our common English flowers of which the Fairy Garland is composed. We have spoken of Fairy Butter; but those fortunate little sprites have not only butter, but cheese as well. It is interesting to find that in Yorkshire the "cheeses" or fruit of the Mallow are called Fairy Cheeses, so that we may be assured that they do not go hungry. But then they are not supposed to be able to eat off the ground as the uncivilized people in some parts of the world do, so in Cheshire and North Wales we find that they are supplied with Fairy Tables in the shape of Fungi. Whether, after they have been thus supplied with cheese, butter, and tables, they eat with their fingers or not, on the principle that fingers were made before knives and forks, we are not authorized to say; but certain it is that they have fingers, aye, and gloves to cover them withal, as we shall presently see. And then, who ever heard of creatures like these being penniless? Or if they should at times be unable to spit on their money at the sight of the new moon, certainly they ought to be able to turn their purses in their pockets! In Lincolnshire we find that a

kind of fungus like a cup or old-fashioned purse with small objects inside is called a Fairy purse, and we presume that the "small objects" represent their cash. Our little heroes and heroines are supposed to require a dip in the sparkling liquid sometimes for the sake of maintaining both a cleanly appearance and fair features, hence we hear in some places of a plant (*Peziza coccinea*) being called Fairies' Bath; and since they would present a very bald appearance to English eyes without a proper covering for the pate, the good people in Jersey provide them with a wig, and call a certain flower (*Cuscuta Epithymum*) Fairies' Hair.

We have now to notice another fact in connection with elves. Let us go down into Cornwall, and we shall there find lingering still the remnants of an old superstition and corresponding custom. When the full crop of apples has been gathered in, it is unlucky to pick any odd ones that may be found remaining afterwards. They are the property of the pixies or elves, and on no account should these creatures be robbed of their due. Originally it was customary to leave a few apples on the trees purposely for their use, it being supposed that they would then exert their influence on behalf of a good crop for the next year. In Devonshire it is still said to be unlucky to gather fruit out of season. We had a few raspberries growing on our bushes late one autumn, after all the other fruit had been gathered. I one day brought several into the house, when the servant remarked that it was very unlucky. The pixies did not like to be robbed of the fruit which they regarded as their own. Similar beliefs exist in most parts of England, and almost everywhere abroad. In some old dictionaries, and dictionaries of provincial and obsolete words, we find such words as Pix, Pex, Pixy-word. Thus Pix or Pex means—"To pick up fruit, as apples or walnuts, after the main crop is taken in"; and Pixy-word is a provincial expression for Pixy-hoard—"The pixy's

hoard, or what is left after the 'picking'; the few remaining apples upon a tree, the crop of which has been gathered. Pixy-word is the term in the neighbourhood of Axminster, and, I believe, in Devonshire generally. In the neighbourhood of Crewkerne the same meaning is conveyed by Col-pexy."[8] When we find the people in Devonshire thus devoted to the Pixy it is not surprising if we hear that they call their vegetables and fruits after those tiny elves. Looking over a gardener's catalogue the other day I found that he was advertising a Savoy Cabbage under the name of the "Little Pixie." From an interesting volume by Dr. M. C. Cooke, entitled "Freaks and Marvels of Plant Life," we learn that other flowers were once originally fairy property. "Some of the tubular flowers are beautiful enough to merit the old belief that they were the habitations of the 'good people.'

> "'Twas I that led you through the painted meads,
> Where the light fairies danced upon the flowers,
> Ranging on every leaf an orient pearl,
> Which, struck together with the silken wind
> Of their loose mantles, made a silver chime.'"

Of some of these tubular flowers we have spoken already. There is the Harebell, of which Mrs. Lankester writes thus:— "It is said that the presence of the Harebell indicates a barren soil; yet how lovely are its tiny cups on their cobweb stems, gently waving to and fro with every breath of wind, so that one might almost believe in the reality of the silver music said to come from them in the days of yore, when the good fairies

> "'Rang their wildering chimes to vagrant butterflies.'"

The Foxglove has already been referred to; but at the risk of repeating a few words, we must quote what Mr. Henderson says respecting this flower in his "Folklore of the Northern Counties," p. 227. "Mr. Wilkie" (he writes) "maintains that the *Digitalis*

purpurea (or Foxglove as we generally call it) was in high favour with the witches, who used to decorate their fingers with its largest bells, thence called 'witches' thimbles.' Hartley Coleridge has more pleasing associations with this gay wild flower. He writes of 'the fays,

"'That sweetly nestle in the foxglove bells,'

and adds in a note: 'Popular fancy has generally conceived a connection between the Foxglove and the good people. In Ireland, where it is called Lusmore, or the Great Herb, and also Fairy-cap, the bending of its tall stalks is believed to denote the unseen presence of supernatural beings. The Shefro, or Gregarious Fairy, is represented as wearing the corolla of a Foxglove on his head, and no unbecoming head-dress either.'"

Now, taking it as an established fact that our word Foxglove has in itself nothing to do with fairies, are we to leave that plant to be the delight of those tiny creatures in Wales and Ireland alone, without ourselves making it a Fairy flower also? That can never be. In fact, our popular names, as employed in various parts of England, abound in proofs that the Foxglove is worthy of a place in the Fairy Garland. In Cheshire, for example, that flower is known as Fairy Petticoats. It was remarked above that the elves were supposed to dress in green, but evidently that applies only to their outside apparel, and there seems to be no reason in the world why they should not have as gay petticoats as their fair rivals who ransack our drapery establishments to find material sufficiently gaudy. As the Welsh call the Woodsorrel by the name of Fairy Bell, so the Irish apply the same name to the Foxglove, and in the same Emerald Isle another name and yet another is given it. Fairies, even if they have hair, cannot expose themselves at night, as we have already seen, without a cap; but then their tiny fingers must be gloved

to match, and so of the foxglove they may make Fairy gloves in Ireland. In their quieter moments the elves are industrious enough to mend their own clothes, and in the Foxglove we have again the Fairy thimbles, and even the Fairy fingers, which are so dexterous and nimble. This latter name for the Foxglove is in use in various parts of England as well as in Ireland, but in the latter place yet another name is given the plant, which, if less poetic and romantic, still proves the strong hold a belief in fairies has upon the people, for it is called Fairy Weed. In Wales the Foxglove flowers are called *Menyg ellyllon*, or Elf gloves, Fairy gloves.

We are told that among the Portuguese the Rosemary was dedicated to the fairies under the name of Alicrum or Elfin Plant; and in Spain, where it was worn as an antidote against the "evil eye," its magic properties were believed in up till quite recent times. With respect to the Irish belief in fairies, of which they distinguish several kinds, we are reminded that the Ragwort is also dedicated to them. It is known in Ireland as the Fairies' Horse; and just as witches delight to ride on the broom or the thorn, so the fairy gallops about at midnight on this golden-blossomed flower. Mr. Henderson writes respecting the St. John's Wort thus: "Of the St. John's Wort the following little notice has reached me from the Isle of Man. Peasants there say (or did say, before the incursion of visitors drove away all the individuality of the place), that if you tread on the St. John's Wort after sunset, a fairy horse will rise from the earth and carry you about all night, leaving you in the morning wherever you may chance to be at sunrise." In Ireland "May-day, or rather May-eve, is a great day among the good people or fairies" (says Mr. Kinahan in the fourth volume of the *Folklore Record*), "and just before sunset a sprig of the mountain ash, or of the willow, must be stuck over every door

and in each field, to preserve the inhabitants, the cattle, and the crops. There are certain hills on which the fairies hold their meetings; these in Irish are called 'cnocksheeaun,' which is now in general half corrupted and half translated into 'Sion Hill' by the English." Among the Slavs the fairy is called Rusialka (or *Rusálka*, which also means "water-nymph") and has its due complement of flowers and plants, its own fairy garland—as we learn from the following invocation addressed to a company of nymphs: "O Rusialki! Rusialki! virgins of dazzling beauty, touch not our crowns. . . . O fairy virgins, you have *flowers in the meadows, leaves in the forest.* O Rusialki, touch not our crowns."[9] In Shakspere's picture of the equipage of a fairy we find the following among other charming lines:—

> "Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut,
> Made by the joiner squirrel, or old grub,
> Time out of mind the fairies' coach-builder."

Another poet thus speaks in the name of the elves:—

> "Upon a mushroom's head
> Our table we do spread:
> A corn of rye or wheat
> Is manchet which we eat;
> Pearly drops of dew we drink,
> In acorn cups fill'd to the brink."

There is much more to the same effect, but I confine myself to that which bears on our subject; the relation of fairies to flowers and plants.

Everyone who is at all acquainted with Greek and Roman mythology is aware that among these ancient peoples a strong faith in Nymphs and Dryads existed. In our names of plants we have traces of this belief, while the German says:—"Eine Dryas lebt in jenem Baum" (a dryad lives in every tree); *i.e.*,

every tree has its presiding deity or dryad; a doctrine we shall constantly meet with in the study of Oriental plant-lore. While the nymph dwelt in the water or on land, the dryad (receiving its name from the root of δρῦς, "a tree") was regarded as the inhabitant of trees, groves, and forests. From the same word we are said to get the name of a religious sect once possessed of great influence in England, the Druids. "The name is usually derived from the word δρῦς (tree or oak), because the Druids lived in forests, where they also had their principal sanctuaries."[10] These dryads or tree fairies have often, according to popular tradition, inflicted injuries upon people who have presumed to touch the trees in which they reside. Until quite recently in England, Scotland, and Scandinavia people refused to cut down the Elder and some other trees, fearing lest they should offend the Tree-mother; and if they were forced to put in the axe, they first sought forgiveness of the elf. The readers of Norse stories are aware that in Denmark, also, it is thought that there dwells in the Elder-tree a being called Hyldemör, or Elder-mother, who avenges all injuries done to the tree. It is therefore considered unsafe to have movable articles made of that wood, and the tale goes that when an infant had on one occasion been placed in a cradle made of Elder, the elf continued to pull it by the legs, and molest it till it was taken out. In Lower Saxony, when the Elder has to be cut down the following formula is repeated three times with bended knees and folded hands:—

"Lady Elder!
Give me some of thy wood,
Then will I give thee some of mine,
When it grows in the forest."

"Few plants were held in so much honour in ancient Germany

as the Elder, probably because so often found about bogs and marshes, where the Will-o'-the-Wisp abounded. Even within this century it was a plant which none dared destroy. Its German names (Hollunder, Holler, Ellhorn, Holder—whence our 'Elder') indicate its association with Hulda, the good mother of northern mythology, whose offspring are the 'elves.' She was known by as many tender appellations as the Madonna who succeeded her—Helle, Hilda, Bertha, Spillaholle (*i.e.*, Spindle Hulda), 'Frau Rose.' The varieties of superstitions connected with the plant correspond to her varied helpfulness; and as she had rites performed in her honour in the Venusberg, near Eisenbach, so late as the fifteenth century, it is not surprising that the superstitions concerning her should still be very strong. In Denmark the name of the Elder is Hildemoer (Elder Mother), and Hilda herself was once supposed to dwell with her elves near its roots. It is yet much planted by walls, and an ancient Elder-tree is often pointed out as having a mysterious history. Thorpe mentions one in a court in Copenhagen which is said to move about at dusk and peep in at windows. The idea that the elves resent any injury done their favourite plant is carried very far. One must not cut it down without saying, 'Elder, Elder, may I cut thy branches?' He will then, if no rebuke be heard, spit three times and proceed."[11] Evil has been thought to follow woodsmen in other lands when they have felled certain trees, the elves being revengeful and malicious. "In the Hindû legend respecting Sâvitri, we are told that the young Satyavant, when engaged in cutting down a tree, was seized with faintness and sweating, under which he fell down exhausted and died. A Tuscan story relates how a man is overtaken by death in the same way; while in the Germanic legend which Mannhardt relates, it is a countrywoman who, in a forest of Fir-trees, endeavours to uproot one

of the stumps, when she becomes so weak, as to be scarce able to walk. No one is able to say what has happened to her, until a kind of magician informs her that she has wounded an elf. If the dryad recovers, she also will get better; but if the elf should die, she will meet with the same fate. The fear of the magician is more than justified. The stump of the tree was the dwelling-place of a fairy or elf, and as it languished so did she, until eventually both died at one and the same time." Among the Esthonians it is believed that the timid elves, in order to avoid the effects of thunder or lightning, get down several feet under the roots of the trees beneath which they dwell. In reference to the Fées, however, it is said that they not only abstain from injuring people who do not offend them,—they will even do them a kindness, and initiate them into some of their secrets. One may therefore well be on guard, as A. de Gubernatis remarks, against injuring a tree possessed by an elf. He says that these little imps are afraid of Valerian, so that in this plant we have an anti-fairy agency. In the mythology of the north we find the Oak gathering all Fairyland around its roots, so that the Elder did not enjoy the honour alone. Grimm has pointed out that in Germany also elves and oaks are connected, for there was an old superstition among the people that the holes found in oak trees are the fairies' pathways; a belief similar to that found in India, where the people will tell you that they are the doors through which the special spirits or dryads of those trees pass in and out. Various complaints may be healed by bringing the hands or feet into contact with these holes. "Near Gundalskol stood an oak popularly regarded as the habitation of a 'Bjarmand,' but he was driven away by the church-bells. It is said that a farmer was engaged to an elf-girl, but instead of a bride he embraced an oak sapling. In a churchyard at Heddinge,

Seeland, are the remains of an Oak wood declared to be the soldiers of the Erl-King, assuming the forms of armed men at night." Very different from the German legend already quoted respecting the fairy and the fir-tree stump, is that which Thorpe relates from the Norse mythology. "The hill of the Harz called Hubinchenstein, covered with holy Firs, amidst which a village nestles, has two explanations of its existence; according to one it was flung by a giant out of his shoe as a grain of sand which hurt him, while the other states that the mountain floated there during the Deluge. However that may be, there are beautiful fir-cones found there, which are wrought into various ornaments. On one occasion the wife of a poor and sick miner went to gather cones, to sell them as a last resource against the starvation of her family. She met a little man in the forest, with a long white beard, who told her where she could get the best cones. When she arrived at the point indicated, the cones fell so thickly that, being frightened, she ran away. Nevertheless, the cones had fallen into her basket, and this basket, as she went homeward, grew constantly heavier. Well it might; the cones turned out to be pure silver. The next day she went to the wood, and found the little man of the snowy beard again, who, laughing at her fright, told her he was the Gubich, or king of the dwarfs, and to the wealth which he had bestowed upon her, he added some plants which restored her husband to health. The now wealthy miner preserved one of his silver-cones, which it is said, may be found in the Grund to this day."

Although the Anemone is generally associated traditionally with Venus, it has also by some been made a Fairy plant, the elves having been credited with the work of painting the crimson veins in its petals. The flower is a natural barometer, and indicates the approach of the night season or of a shower, by curling over its petals in a tent-like fashion. This was supposed

also to be done by the fairies, who nestled inside the tent of fair leaves, and pulled the curtains round them. Crocus was once a beautiful youth who fell in love with the nymph Smilax. He is said to have been turned into the golden spring blossoms on account of his impatience. The author of the "Language of Flowers" justly remarks that the Cowslip is also a Fairy flower.

"'The five small drops of red
In the golden chalice shed,'

"are said to possess the rare virtue of retaining for youth its beauty, or even of restoring it when lost. Shakspere will tell you the reason why; he is speaking of the fairy queen:—

"'And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green:
The cowslips tall her pensioners be,
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favours;
In those freckles live their savours.'"

It must be remembered that there is a great difference between poetic fancy and popular superstition. Yet if Shakspere makes the Cowslip a Fairy flower, a brother poet speaks of the same plant as though he, too, regarded it as such, and says:—

"Still thou ought'st to have thy meed,
To show thy flower as well as weed.
Though no fays, from May-day's lap
Cowslips on thee dare to drop;
Still doth nature yearly bring
Fairest heralds of the spring."

From these lines we learn that the Cowslip sometimes contained fays in its petals, though on May-day, for some reason they were incapable of dropping on it.[12]

It should be borne in mind that in Lincolnshire the Cowslip (*Primula veris*) is actually regarded as a Fairy flower, being

known under the name of Fairy Cups. "Many a fair legend is connected with this wine-producing flower. The 'tiny people' —as legends tell—love to nestle in the drooping bells, with their crimson drops. Hear you not soft music pealing from them, when the moon shines bright, and dew glitters on the grass; sweet voices, too, singing the praises of that sheltering flower, wherein they can await the passing by of showers, when clouds and moonbeams alternate? The poet's eye discerns, it may be, the hurrying of fairy crowds when pattering raindrops begin to fall; their gossamer robes —now light, now dark, as leaf shadows fall upon them, and their anxious tiny faces looking wistfully through the blades of grass for some friendly Cowslip. In a moment they are seen clambering up the stalks, rushing each one into the nearest bell; and then a symphony of soft sweet voices is heard proceeding from that same tuft of Cowslip; and he who listens, may hear, perchance, a melody of Fairyland."

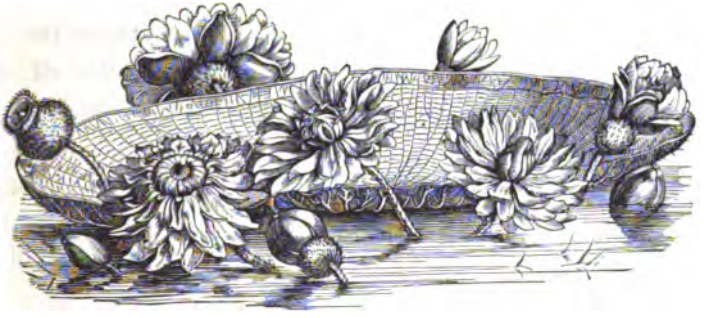
COWSLIP (*Primula veris*)
a, plant; *b*, calyx; *c*, corolla; *d*, corolla open; *e*, pistil; *f*, seed capsule (burst open).

There are some plants and trees whose names would seem to have been influenced by the belief in elves. Thus, for example,

the Elm is frequently known as the Elven, as though people once had the notion that the fairies specially delighted in that tree; while a stalk of Wild Parsley is in the Western counties called Eltrot, which name may, however, have little or nothing to do with elves. In some of these cases the question can only be decided by a careful tracing back of the word to its earliest known form. We have seen how, in the case of the Alder and other trees, misconception has arisen through similarity of names and words. Perhaps the same may be said of the names Fayberry, Faeberry, and Feaberry, which are in many places applied to the Gooseberry, but this is uncertain. And now, while I do not pretend to have gathered up all the flowers which fairies regard as their own, and though our arrangement of their Garland is by no means artistic or perfect, I think enough has been said to show us that the subject is full of variety and interest, and also to convince us that the faith of our ancestors in the existence of fairies must have been very strong. We shall find, I believe, equally strong evidence of their faith in other beings possessed of powers for doing good or harm to men. Before I turn to the next chapter, however, there is one other point to which I should like to refer—viz., the Rev. S. Baring Gould's interesting description of a curious oil-painting preserved at Lew Trenchard House, Devon, representing the merrymaking of pixies or elves. The account is from Henderson's "Folklore of the Northern Counties," pp. 276-7, and is as follows:—

"In the background is an elfin city, illumined by the moon. Before the gates is a ring of tiny beings, dancing merrily around what is probably a corpse candle: it is a candle-stump standing on the ground, and the flame diffuses a pallid white light. In the foreground is water, on which floats a pumpkin, with a quarter cut out of it, so as to turn it into a boat with a hood. In this the pixy king and his consort are enthroned,

while round the sides of the boat sit the court, dressed in the costume of the period of William of Orange, which is the probable date of the painting. On the hood sits a little elf, with a red toadstool as an umbrella over the head of the king and queen. In the bow sits Jack-o'-Lanthorn, with a cresset in his hand, dressed in a red jacket. Beside him is an elf playing on a Jew's harp, which is as large as himself; and another mischievous red-coated sprite is touching the vibrating tongue of the harp with a large extinguisher, so as to stop the music. The water all round the royal barge is full of little old women and red-jacketed hobgoblins in egg-shells and crab-shells; whilst some of the imps who have been making a ladder of an iron boat-chain have missed their footing, and are splashing about in the water. In another part of the picture the sprites appear to be illuminating the window of a crumbling tower." Fairy life, if we may judge from the pictures drawn by fertile imaginations, must be very enjoyable; at any rate it is *usually* innocent, and we do not think that our simple-hearted forefathers were altogether to be pitied for being able to pass so many pleasant hours in chats about fairies and "the Fairy Garland."



LILIES.

CHAPTER II.

FROM PIXY TO PUCK.

LEAVING the magic haunts of the fairy we come now to tread on ground which would be of a less enchanting character, were it not that we have still to do with the flowers themselves, and not with the beings after whom they have been named. According to Prior it is not far from Pixy to Puck, for in his valuable work we find the following note:—"*Pixie-stools*, a synonym of 'toad-stools' and 'paddock-stools,' the work of those elves—

"'Whose pastime
Is to make midnight mushrooms,'

"and a name of some interest, as showing the identity of the king of the fairies, *Puck*, with the toad, which in the language of Friesland is called *pogge;* for *pixie* is the feminine or diminutive of *Puck*, and the *pixie-stool* the toad-stool. The name is in the Western counties of England given to all suspicious

mushrooms alike, but in printed books is generally assigned to the Champignon." Again the same writer tells us that toad-stool is the name for any unwholesome fungi, and the supposition is that they were so called from a belief that toads sit on them. The old poet Spenser says,—

"The griesly todestool grown there mought I see,
And loathed paddocks lording on the same."

TOAD-STOOL (*Agaricus cæsareus*).
a, fully grown fungus; *b*, young fungus; *c*, section of the latter.

But as the toad was an impersonation of the devil in popular opinion, perhaps the word may once have had the same meaning as Pixie Stool, and have referred to their origin from the devil frequenting the place where they are found.[1] Everyone knows the puff-balls which grow in our fields about the time

when mushrooms are in season; they are frequently known as Puck-fist; and since Puck and Devil are often regarded as one and the same, we find that the same plant is called Devil's Snuff-box, or Old Man's Snuff-box; where the name "Old Man" is probably only a more polite and euphemistic form for "Devil." In "Piers Plowman" and other old works, Puck was regarded as the same as Satan, but he came afterwards to be looked upon as the king of fairies, and given to coarse, practical jokes. Many of the plants which bear his name have a meaning which point to this fact, although it has been necessary to disguise it in some instances on account of the vulgar character of the words employed. The tendency to employ vulgar names for plants was remarked by Shakspere who speaks of

> "Long-purples
> That liberal shepherds give a grosser name."

In reference to the term Puff-ball, as applied to the fungus sometimes called Devil's Snuff-box, we think it perfectly natural and appropriate; but it is stated by some writers that Puff is a mere corruption of Puck or Pouk. The Irish name is said to be Pooka-foot. The curious little old-fashioned flower which you will often find still in cottage gardens, and which goes by such names as Love-in-a-mist, Prick-my-nose, or Garden Fennel-flower, is also associated with the Evil One, and called Devil-in-a-bush, on account of its horned capsule peering from a bush of finely-divided fringe or involucre. We are all familiar with the plant (*Tritoma*) which has a flower growing on a tall stalk, and presenting the appearance of a poker just taken out of the fire. This plant is often called Red-hot Poker on that account; but in Devonshire and in some other places it goes by the name of Devil's Poker. It would be difficult in many cases to account for these apparently capricious names, but they frequently have

some legend or story attached to them to justify their employment. In the chapter on "Traditions about Flowers" you will find many illustrations of this. Take for example the Scabious, which was once called Forebitten More or "bitten-off root." In order to account for this strange appearance in the root it was asserted that it had been bitten off by someone, and surely no one but the devil could perform that, underground. So the tale was started that he did it out of malice, for he saw that the herb was good for all manner of diseases, and he begrudges man the use of such a valuable medicine. The plant now bears the name of Devil's Bit in England; in German it is similarly known as *Teufels Abbiss*, and in Latin again as *Morsus diaboli*.[2] Besides the tradition just recorded we find others such as the following. With this root the devil practised such power, that the Mother of God, out of compassion, took from him the means to do so with it any more. In the great vexation he felt at being thus deprived of his power, he bit off the root, which has never grown again to this day. If these legends do not suffice, we have another which says that the root used to be longer until the devil bit it off; for he needed it not to make him sweat, who is always tormented with fear of the day of judgment. The name of Devil's Darning-Needles has been given to the Scandix, or as it is perhaps more popularly called, Shepherd's Needle or Venus' Comb. This is on account of the plant possessing long awns or needles, having much the same appearance as the teeth of a comb. Then you will sometimes hear people speak of Devil's Guts, a name which is given to two or more different plants. The roots of the Wild Convolvulus sometimes go by that appropriate, if unpleasant name, on account of the fact that they run down deep into the ground, and spread rapidly abroad, defying the skill of the gardener or farmer to entirely eradicate them when once thoroughly in possession of

a home. This plant has accordingly been taken as an appropriate emblem of obstinacy. "It represents to us," says an old writer, "an obstinate person who persists in his opinion, and prefers being torn into a thousand pieces rather than yield benevolently to what is required of him." Another plant which bears this name is the Dodder, on account of the mischief it causes, and from the resemblance of the stem—which winds around other plants and strangles them—to catgut. Other popular names will show with how little favour the plant is regarded, for it is known as Hell-weed, Strangle-tare, Lady's Laces, etc. The Sun-Spurge, or Turnsole (that which turns its face to the sun), and other plants are in some places known as Devil's Milk from the acrid and poisonous juice or sap they contain. We shall presently find that the same name exists in Germany.

The connection of the devil with flowers and plants is seen in other ways than that already indicated, for he is popularly believed to exert his influence for evil over certain kinds of fruit. A young lady was walking with us during the autumn whilst the blackberries were still in their prime; and as we plucked one now and again, she remarked, that in Somersetshire where she lived, people would not gather blackberries after Michaelmas day, as they were believed not to be good. The same superstition exists in Sussex and in many other counties of England, while in Ireland we find the same idea. The explanation is found in the popular saying, "At Michaelmas the devil puts his foot on the blackberries." Mr. Henderson remarks that he is not aware that the custom of abstaining from this fruit after that date extends to the north of England, but he has found traces of it in Devonshire. "On the Tweed side," he adds ("Folklore of the Northern Counties," p. 96), "although no mention is made of St. Michael's Day, yet it is held that late in the autumn the devil throws his club over the black-

berries and renders them poisonous, or at least unwholesome. The Rev. R. O. Bromfield informs me that a boy once related to him circumstantially that he had seen this done, and that the club had come thundering over an old dyke and among the brambles just beside him, effectually putting an end to his feast off the blackberries. In Sussex, the 10th of October is fixed as the limit of blackberrying, and they say that the devil then goes round the country and spits on the bramble-bushes! Note that the 10th of October is 'Old Michaelmas Day.'" Mrs. Latham says,—"The following extraordinary superstition was mentioned by a farmer's wife living near Arundel. She is in the habit of making every year a large quantity of blackberry jam, and, finding that less fruit than she required had been brought to her this autumn, she said to the charwoman, her assistant, 'I wish you would send out some of your children to gather me three or four pints more.' 'Ma'am!' exclaimed the woman, 'don't you know that this is the 11th of October?' 'Yes,' was the answer. 'Bless me, ma'am!' was the response, 'and you ask me to let my children go out blackberrying! Why, I thought everybody knew that the devil went round on the 10th of October, and spat on all the blackberries, and that if any person were to eat one on the eleventh, they or some one belonging to them would die or fall into great trouble before the year was out. No! nothing should persuade me to let any child of mine go blackberrying on the 11th of October.'" The same writer adds another note on the relation of the devil to plants, to which we may here call attention, though reference is made to it in the chapter on "Proverbs respecting Flowers and Plants." "The watchfulness of the said evil spirit makes it dangerous to go out nutting on a Sunday, and worthy mothers may be heard warning their children against it, by assuring them that if they do so, the devil will hold down the branches

for them." Had Mrs. Latham not called attention to this, I could testify to the horror which used to possess the minds of well-trained young people in Sussex in my school-boy days, if they chanced to see their companions gathering nuts on their way to school or church on Sunday; and the voice of warning has frequently been raised in my own hearing, if not by myself, when such transgressors have been detected. In other countries than England the warning against nutting on a Sunday is given, and more explicitly, as levity of conduct was wont to mark the occasion.

If we go abroad, we find the devil still maintaining his connection with flowers and plants. Let us hear what the author of "Freaks and Marvels of Plant Life" has to say on the subject. "The monarch of flowers, in respect to size, is that first discovered by Sir Stamford Raffles, and named after him, Rafflesia. It is a large fleshy parasite, growing on the roots of other plants, without leaves, and consisting entirely of a single enormous flower, 'of a very thick substance, the petals and nectary being in but a few places less than a quarter of an inch thick, and in some places three quarters of an inch: the substance of it is very succulent. When I first saw it, a swarm of flies were hovering over the mouth of the nectary, and apparently laying their eggs in the substance of it. It had precisely the smell of tainted beef. It measured a full yard across, the petals, which were subrotund, being twelve inches from the base to the apex, and it being about a foot from the insertion of the one petal to the opposite one, the nectary, in the opinion of all of us, would hold twelve pints, and the weight of this prodigy we calculated to be fifteen pounds.' (Hooker's "Companion to Botanical Magazine," vol. i., p. 262; "Transactions of Linnæan Society," vol. xiii.) The flower was first discovered in 1818, on the Manna River in Sumatra,

where it is said to be known by the name of the 'Devil's Siri Box!' Dr. Arnold says that when he first saw it in the jungle it made a powerful impression on him." If *we* favour the devil with a snuff-box in the form of the Puff-ball, there is no reason why he should be less highly honoured abroad, and since in the East nature is so lavish of her wealth, it is only right that the Devil's Siri Box should keep its due proportions there. The Siri is the Betel which is so largely used in the East.

We are well aware that many people associate the evil one with intoxicating drink, which has been rightly regarded as "The Devil's Chain"; but perhaps everyone has not heard the proverb, "There is a devil in every berry of the grape." This proverb is in use in some parts of England, and is said to have strayed hither from Turkey. In the East the grape grows luxuriantly, and its juice is freely drunk. But while, on the one hand, it is undoubtedly, under certain conditions, one of the most wholesome, nutritious, and valuable of drinks, it may, on the other hand, prove to be ruinous to health, purse, and character, and so justify the saying of the Turk, that every grape contains a devil.

In the first chapter I remarked that the fairies or pixies laid claim to a certain share of the crop of fruit which grew every year in the orchards of Devonshire and Cornwall. It appears that the devil also puts in a similar claim in Scotland, and we shall find that the custom of allotting him his share of the good things of life exists in one form or another universally. It seems that the custom originally came into use in connection with the worship of spirits or ancestors, and it will be remembered that there is still a good deal of confusion in the minds of most superstitious people respecting the proper character of spirits, ghosts, elves, fairies, demons, pixies, good-folk, the

gudeman, puck, and the devil. This being borne in mind, it will be easy to understand how they have got mixed up together in popular customs and observances, and how what is considered as the right of the ancestral spirit or house-spirit in one place, is appropriated to the Pixy in another, and to Puck or the gudeman in another. Thus, "In Scotland green patches may still be seen on field or moor, left uncultivated as 'the gudeman's croft,' by which it has been hoped to buy the goodwill of the otherwise evil-disposed devil or Earth-spirit; and it is doubtless from a similar fear of showing neglect or disrespect, that Esthonian peasants dislike parting with any earth from their fields, and in drinking beer or eating bread recognize the existence and wants of the Earth-spirit by letting some drops of the one, and some crumbs of the other, find their way to the floor. The instances of Esthonian superstitions are taken from Grimm's collection in the 'Teutonic Mythology.' Their date is 1788. The same interest attaches to them from an archæological point of view, whether they exist still or have become extinct." So writes Mr. Farrer in his valuable work on "Primitive Manners and Customs," p. 309, and we find that his remarks are abundantly confirmed. In Mr. Henderson's "Popular Rhymes of Berwickshire" we read that "Cloutie's Croft, or the gudeman's field, consisted of a small portion of the best land, set apart by the inhabitants of some Scottish villages as a propitiatory gift to the devil, on which property they never ventured to intrude. It was dedicated to the devil's service alone, being left untilled and uncropped, and it was reckoned highly dangerous to break up by tillage such pieces of ground." Now on the Continent we find the same custom under various forms. Grimm says that down to late times the house-spirits and dwarfs had their portion set aside for them by the superstitious people of some places. But in other places the habit has not died out

even yet. The same writer relates that ears of corn are set apart and offered to Woden on the Continent, as elsewhere the same offerings are made to elves and spirits. In the Black Mountain the house-spirits are supposed to wander about as Will-o'-the-Wisps, or even to take the form of birds, which perch on the tops of trees and watch for the offerings of the pious. These are made in the form of fruits and food, and so lead us to understand the meaning of the ancient custom of the Brahmans in India, known as Kâkasparça. This consisted in exposing (*sparça*) a ball of rice to be eaten by crows (*kâka*). So the Buddhist priests in Canton to-day, after chanting a short grace, bless a small portion of their rice and place it at the door of the refectory to be eaten by the birds which congregate there. The houses of the Chinese are all provided with little places on which to lay offerings of flowers, fruits, and food for the use of their departed ancestors, who in the form of house-spirits frequently come back to visit their friends and look for expressions of thoughtful provision for their wants. I cannot go into further details, as we have already been led rather away from our main subject, although by an interesting and justifiable excuse. In the subjoined notes the student will find a number of references by means of which he can trace for himself the whole history of the subject from the present custom of worshipping ancestors, and making offerings of fruits and flowers, as still practised in China and elsewhere, down to the Hindu and Slavonic custom of regarding the spirits as birds,—a very natural transition, seeing that spirits are supposed to be capable of flight,—and then on to the Scotch and English custom of consecrating certain portions of the crops to the fairies, pixies, or gudeman, or of setting apart certain trees or plots of ground for their exclusive use.[3]

The large variety of names by which in various places the

devil is known makes it almost impossible for us to gather up all the scattered notices of him which may be found in connection with plant and flower lore. One who had not studied mythology or philology would scarcely expect to find in the Troll-flower a testimony to the popular belief in the existence of Evil spirits. Yet this name, which is applied to the Globe flower (*Trollius europæus*), is by some connected with the word Troll in the Scandinavian mythology, meaning a malignant giant-being. The Globe-flower is possessed of acrid, poisonous qualities, from which fact it seems to have derived its name. To enter into a discussion of the philological questions here raised would be out of place, and though other explanations of the name have been given, it may be remarked that the Swedish language contains more than one name for flowers derived from or compounded with the word Troll. For example, Herbparis or Truelove is known by the Swede as Troll-bär or Puck's Berry, while another plant (*Byssus bombicina*) is honoured with the title of Troll-kött. Further, we frequently find that the flowers which in Scotland are dedicated to witches are among the people on the opposite coasts regarded as the property of Evil spirits. Thus Prior, in speaking of the name Troll-flower, says that it corresponds to the Scotch name Witches' Gowan; and we may add that while the Round-leaved Bell-flower (*Campanula rotundifolia*) is called Witch-bells in Scotland, and Lady's Thimbles in some parts of England, in Sweden it is known as Märebiäl, or the *bell* of the night-*mare*, which is regarded as a malignant spirit; a view which is entertained by people as far separated as the Chinese and the Shetlanders. Yet one other example. There is a peculiar species of fungus of very rapid growth (*Exidia glandulosa*), which among ourselves goes by the name of Witches' Butter. This is called by the Swedish people Troll-smör, Troll's or Devil's Butter. In Jutland the plant

Polytrichum commune goes by the name of "Loki's Oats," and when there is a shimpering motion in the air the remark is made that "Loki is sowing his oats." Loki, being the nearest approach to the devil in the mythology of the North, is sometimes spoken of as sowing weeds among the good seed. This is possibly the origin of the phrase, "He is sowing his wild oats." Mr. King says: "The wild oat (*Avena fatua*) of the English proverb is the 'dwarf's grass' of Northumberland; but in this case the dwarf is the savage 'brown man of the moors,' and no playful Robinet. He has taken the place of Loki, the Evil god of the north; and the wild oat is still called 'Loki's hair' [perhaps through the meaning of *haver* or *hafra* (oats) being confused with that of the word *hår* or *haar*] in Jutland, where the proverb touching a careless scapegrace runs 'Loki is sowing his seed in him.' The Danish saying is so far better than the English, that it distinctly recognises the tares as the sowing of the 'enemy'." So in the Bible we read "An enemy hath done this." We have already seen that the Globe flower is consecrated to the Trolls; and it must be observed that in Scotland, besides being known as Witches' Gowan, it is also called Locken, Lucken, or Lukin Gowan, where it is quite possible that the influence of Loki is to be traced, although the interpretation of the name as given by some writers does not recognize this. Loki was the personification of malice and subtlety combined, in which particulars he exactly corresponds with the devil of the Semitic and European races. The life of Loki as set before us in the Eddas presents several striking points of coincidence with the history of that early deceiver. For a time he is in favour with the Æsir, is, in fact, the foster-brother of Odin himself; but he undergoes a change of disposition, and becomes the enemy of all goodness and the destroyer of Baldur, who represents that quality. It is he who beguiles Idun, the possessor of the apples of immortality; he

is the parent of the great serpent which encircles the world. He, too, is the parent of Hel or Death, but is now regarded as bound in chains till the last day, when he will break forth from his imprisonment and lead on his confederates in warfare against the gods. In addition to the plant called Loki's Oats, there is another which in Jutland is known as Loki's Purse.[4] This is what is usually known among ourselves as the Yellow Rattle. Gubernatis remarks that in the Scandinavian mythology the demon Loki is the enemy of oats; and it is said that he is able at will to take the form of a wolf. It must be observed that in many instances where the name of Wolf occurs in connection with plants it is but a synonym for demon, devil, or Evil spirit. In the old classics of India we often meet with the devil under this form, and in Germany a prominent figure in plant mythology is a demon called *Graswolf*. Our well-known name of Lupine literally means 'wolfish,' and it is not a little remarkable that the Dutch call this flower *Wolfsboon—i.e.*, Wolf's Bean. In Swedish the name is *Vargböna*, the meaning of which is exactly the same, while another plant bears the name of *Vargmjölk*, or Wolf's Milk. But when we get into the region of these plants and plant names our study must needs become mythological and philological; and as I do not wish here to show how the wolf may possibly be regarded as a representation of some mythological creature, it will be sufficient that I have indicated the possible connection of that creature with the Evil One, just as in Germany and Japan and other countries foxes and fairies are intimately related. To come back to the subject more immediately before us, there is perhaps no country in the world in which the devil has been more highly honoured than in Germany. "Millet (which, it is said, will not be eaten by birds if sown after sunset), was much used in ancient German festivals. The old dragon (lightning), who, when fiery-red, dropped gold some-

where on the ground, and when blue betokened plenty of grain, was said to be fed on millet in his earthly form (the serpent); and so it was said that millet, eaten on the first day of the year, would make one rich." In some parts, the Fern seed which ensures good luck is in the keeping of the devil, and can only be obtained from him at midnight of St. John's Eve. So of the Mandrake it is popularly believed in some places, that the devil is perpetually watching over it, and if it be pulled up at certain holy times, due attention being given to the repetition of proper invocations, Satan will aid the person who makes use of the plant for magical purposes. One of its names is Devil's Food.

Amongst the many plant-names which bear the impress of the evil one in Germany and the sister countries of Sweden, Denmark, and Holland, we may notice the following, referring the reader to the notes at the end of the book for the works in which he will find assistance in the study. It will be necessary here and there to introduce the foreign name by which the plant is known, but it may be easily remembered that Teufel is the German form of our Devil, which in Dutch again is Duivel. In both these countries the Wild Scabious, of which I have already spoken, is called Devil's Bit, while in Germany the name of Devil's Eye (*Teufels-Auge*) is applied to the Henbane.[5] The name of Devil's Band or Devil's Riband (*Teufels-Band*) is applied to the small Toad-flax; a strange fact, when we remember that in both France and Germany it was dedicated to the Virgin. The same name was also applied to the Snapdragon or Calves' Snout (*Antirrhinum*), while the Alpine Anemone is called Devil's Beard. This reminds us of another important fact. The House-leek has long been known as Jupiter's Beard, but Jupiter and Thor frequently exchange places and share each other's luck. Now in Denmark, when the people speak of Old Thor they mean the devil, and he was popularly believed to preside over

storms and thunder. The Houseleek, being dedicated to Thor, Jupiter, or the Devil, was therefore supposed to be efficacious in guarding the house on which it was placed from the power of thunder as well as of evil spirits. I shall have to speak of this fact again by-and-by, when we come to consider the other names of plants devoted to Thor and Jupiter. The Poplar-leaved fig-tree is called the Devil's Tree (*Teufels-Baum*), and many are the superstitions which cluster around this and other trees of a similar nature, referring either to the Devil himself, or to Judas, his personification. The berry of the Deadly Nightshade is known as the Devil's Berry, which reminds us that the whole plant has something uncanny attaching to it. It is sometimes called Death's Herb, and was formerly known under the name of Dwale, the fruit being called Dwale-berry—*i.e.*, torpor or trance berry, from the Danish word (*dvale*), meaning a trance or dead-sleep. This is the explanation given by some writers, though it is only fair to say that others connect it with the French word (*deuil*) meaning grief or mourning, but for what reason we cannot say, except that it caused those people to mourn whose friends ate the berries and died. But the testimony of the Danish *dvale-bær*, or trance-berry, is in favour of the former suggestion. In Chaucer's time it was employed for sleeping-draughts—hence his remark that "There needeth him no dwale." But the name was also applied to other plants possessing soporific qualities. The Belladonna is, we are told, in Bohemia esteemed to be a favourite plant of the devil, who is supposed to watch over it. He may, however, be drawn from it on a certain night in the year by letting loose a black hen, after which it is supposed he will immediately run. The name Belladonna refers to an ancient belief that the Nightshade is the form of a fatal enchantress. Closely connected with this plant are several others, which by their

poisonous qualities have gained the distinction of being consecrated to the devil and his confederates. The Greek goddess Hekate was supposed to preside over the lower world; she was said to know the names of all the herbs, and to teach her daughters their special qualities. In consequence of this, such poisonous plants as the Belladonna and Aconite, with the Mandrake, Cyclamen, Azalea, Mint, Sesamum, and a variety of others, were sacred to Hekate.

CORN-BINDWEED (*Convolvulus arvensis.*)
a, plant; *b*, section of corolla; *c*, ripe fruit; *d*, root.

To return to Germany, we find that the name for the Corn-bindweed or Bare-bind was *Teufels-Darm*, an epithet which I shall not need to translate, as it exactly answers to the common English names for the same plant and for the Dodder, already given. The same may be said of the Swedish *Dyfvels-träck* and the German *Teufels-Dreck* as names for Assafœtida. Speaking of this and other plants noted for their strong and offensive odour, one writer makes the remark that it is physiologically curious that drugs made from them should possess great influence over hysterical complaints, and that it is remarkable that, disgusting as are their smell and taste, a very short time not only reconciles people to them, but even renders what at first seemed

insufferably nauseous not merely bearable, but pleasant. Thus Assafœtida, which, to mark the disgust with which it was at first regarded, has received the name of Devil's Dung (*Stercus diaboli*), forms in many parts of Arabia and Persia a medicine, and is indeed also employed to give a relish to other food of a more insipid nature. And to such an extent do epicures indulge in the use of this luxury, that an intolerable smell pervades their persons, which makes approach to them, especially by strangers, almost impossible. The Banian Indians likewise employ it liberally in their cooking, and carry pieces of it about with them, as bon-bons are carried in Europe; and even rub their mouths with it before meals to create an appetite. Indigo bears in Germany the name of Devil's Dye. When first introduced into Europe, it was mixed with woad to brighten its colour; but by degrees the quantity of woad was decreased, and indigo took its place. The woad cultivators naturally opposed this intrusion, and prevailed on several governments to prohibit the use of the foreign article. In Germany an Imperial Edict was published in 1656, prohibiting the use of indigo, or "Devil's Dye" as the learned counsellors chose to designate it; a fact which strongly reminds us of the expressions still used in Chinese documents to-day when reference is made to opium, and even to less objectionable articles. In Germany, as in England, the Spurge is called Devil's Milk, and Devil's Claw is the name for Earth-moss. Even the Clematis or Virgin's Bower, of which we shall speak in the next chapter, is claimed for the Evil One, and called Devil's Thread; and the Plantain, which we call Soldiers, Hard-heads, or Fighting Cocks, is Devil's Head in Germany. Where so many plants (and I have given but a few) are dedicated to Puck, we shall not be surprised to find many different kinds of plant-demons. This is the case in Germany to a remarkable extent. Among the many names

there in use we find that of Aprilochse, which designates a demon supposed to lurk about the fields in April in the form of an ox (*Ochse*). The Lettuce has a special enemy in the Krautesel; while such names as Kornwolf, Kornsau, Kornkind, Kornmutter, Kornkuh, and others are given to various demons and sprites, whose delight it is to dwell among and injure the corn. We meet also with the Katzenmann (Cat-man or rather Man-cat) and the Kleesau, besides the Kartoffelwolf, whose special province is among potatoes, and Heukatze, Heupudel, Graswolf, Gerstenwolf, Habergeiss, and Haferbock. Had these various monsters been the invention of one man's brain, we should have had just cause to marvel at its capabilities; but they have doubtless taken ages to grow up, along with their brethren, and were the offspring of many imaginations. "The field spirits which figure so largely at the present day in the superstitions of the Russian peasantry, linger in Germany in the notions concerning the grain, straw, etc., which were at an earlier period believed to be each under a guardian. In Iceland the farmer guards the grass around his field, lest the elves abiding in them invade his crops. In the word 'cereal' we have the record of the faith in the relation of Ceres to the grain, which made the temple of that goddess at Rome the tribune of the democracy. The torches with which she searched for the lost seed, carried off by the winter frost, and raised it to its flower again, are still burning on our altars. Bertha was the Ceres of the German mythology; and all such winds and clouds as affect the crops were believed to be arranged by her. In the Odenwald, near Rodenstein, the ruined castle of the Wild Huntsman, there is a weird rock called the Wildes Weibchenstein, believed to be the haunt of a little woman who comes forth when someone is late in harvesting, and cuts the corn and binds it into sheaves behind the reapers with astonishing celerity. This is Bertha

again. She protected the grain so formidably that children were warned that they must not go into a field where it was growing, for fear the Wehr-wolf (Were-wolf) should seize them. On the contrary, in Schleswig one is safe from the Wehr-wolf in a cornfield." Mr. Ralston, in his interesting sketch of the contents of some of Mannhardt's works says: "Nearly allied to the Tree-spirits, according to primitive ideas, were the Corn-spirits which haunted and protected the green or yellow fields. But by the popular fancy they were often symbolized under the form of wolves or of 'buckmen,' goat-legged creatures, similar to the classic Satyrs. When the wind blows the long grass or waving corn, German peasants still say 'The Grass-wolf' or 'The Corn-wolf is abroad'; in many places the last sheaf of rye is left afield as a shelter for the *Roggenwolf*, or Rye-wolf, during the winter's cold, and in many a summer or autumn festive rite that being is represented by a rustic, who assumes a wolf-like appearance. The Corn-spirit, however, was often symbolized under a human form." We find that among our own peasantry a similar superstition once existed, and the Kirnbaby was supposed to dwell in the ears of English wheat.

Plants have been divided into good and bad, or useful and injurious, and it was long held that while the former were the work of the good spirit, the devil had the credit of producing the latter. Among the Persians, the bad were the work of Ahriman, the good of Ahuramazda or Ormuzd. "All the herbs and all the plants which are gloomy, inauspicious, cursed, or haunted, belong to the devil. But there are some among them which enjoy the special privilege of bearing his proper name. In India the Sorcerer's herb (*Linapis racemosa*), which may be used by the magician, and perhaps also to avert his power, is called *Asurî*, which is the name for a demon in female form."

In the chapter on "The Magic Wand" will be found many facts connected with this subject, for as A. de Gubernatis remarks, the work of the sorcerer is always done in the name of the devil, who alone may be truly said to possess all the secrets of nature, and who consents to impart the same to those who serve him. Among the Little Russians the Tobacco plant is regarded as belonging to Puck. "Several plants also which have taken their names from the serpent or dragon ought to be ranked among the devil's pharmacy," says a recent learned writer, and many examples might be adduced. The names of seven or eight such plants are collected from Indian works alone by Mons. de Gubernatis, and one might easily expand the number. In China one name for Asparagus is *Lung-su-ts'ai*, or "Dragon's Beard," and the well-known Eastern fruit of the Longan tree (*Dimocarpus*) is the "Dragon's Eye," for such is the meaning of *Longan*. But there are still many plants which bear the immediate name of the devil to which I have not yet called attention. In England, for example, besides the many names already noted, we find a kind of Ranunculus called Devil-on-

TOBACCO (*Nicotiana Tabacum*).
a, plant; *b*, corolla with anthers; *c*, stamen with calyx; *d*, capsules.

both-Sides, while Herbparis is in Perthshire known as Devil-in-a-Bush, a name applied to the plant because the flower is surrounded by four leaves, a similar reason leading us in the South to call the Fennel-flower by the same name. In Northants I recently heard a very curious and interesting name for a certain species of Polyanthus; viz., Pug-in-a-primmel. Here Pug stands for Puck, and primmel for Primerole or Primrose. In some parts of England the general name for Ferns is Devil's Brushes, while in Cheshire, where the children draw the Yarrow across their faces and experience a tingling sensation in consequence, that plant is called the Devil's Nettle. If the prince of the powers of the air has his Snuff-box, a name applied to various species of Lycoperdon on account of the cloud of snuff-like matter that flies up when a ripe puff-ball is kicked or pressed, there is also a Devil's Stinkpot. This name is in Yorkshire applied to the Stinkhorn (*Phallus impudicus*), but in Norfolk the same plant is called Devil's Horn. I have already remarked that in Germany as well as among ourselves there are plants known as Devil's Milk; but in Ireland and elsewhere one of these same plants is called the Devil's Churn-staff, on account of its poisonous properties; for even the devil does not seem to be able to make butter out of milk without a churn. I have not yet come across a Devil's Cow in the form of a flower or plant, though we have a beetle in Devonshire and Somerset which goes by that name, and the general belief is that if you spit on its head, the saliva will turn to blood. It actually does become red. But if the devil gets his milk from the plant direct, without the necessity of its passing through an animal machine, he cannot be supposed to live without food. We therefore provide him with Devil's Oatmeal or Parsley, names applied to one and the same plant, Hare or Coney Parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), as we perhaps more generally call it. If he wishes to go for a drive, there

are the Devil's Coachwheels, as the people in Hampshire call one of the plants already mentioned, and the same plant (*Ranunculus arvensis*) supplies him elsewhere with a Curry Comb for dressing down his horses after their heated chase. I said in the first chapter that the Stitchwort is dedicated about Plymouth to the pixies, but it also bears the name of Devil's Eyes in Denbighshire, and Devil's Corn in the neighbourhood of Shrewsbury; while the Red Campion, which is generally sacred to Robin Goodfellow, is known about Liverpool as the Devil's-flower. If the Virgin has her garters, so has the arch-enemy of the Virgin's seed; for in Ireland the Convolvulus is called Devil's Garter. It will be remembered that the same plant, on account of its long creeping roots and climbing habit, has gained other names connecting it with the devil and the lower regions. I have already shown that plants sacred to the Virgin are sometimes set apart for the use of the devil as well. Thus the black species of Mary's-hand Orchis is in the northern countries called Satan's-hand; similarly the plant often called Lady's-fingers (*Lotus corniculatus*) bears the names of Devil's-fingers and Devil's-claws as well. This latter name is also applied in some places to another plant on account of the hooks which terminate each seed, and because it is one of the most obnoxious weeds with which the farmer has to deal (*Ranunculus arvensis*). This plant is wonderfully rich in names of this description. The well-known Arum is sometimes called Devil's Men and Women, or Devil's Ladies and Gentlemen, by no means so desirable a name as the equally common Lords and Ladies. The devil also claims a Daisy, to which I shall have again to refer, and not content with a single flower or a single daisy, he claims the Wild Garlic as his Posy. At this we do not wonder, for surely the plant may well reckon for its fœtid smell as a twin sister of the Assafœtida. The other

day I walked through Bradley Woods near Newton Abbot, and without seeing a single specimen of the plant, I found the air loaded with its nauseous perfume. I said that the Clematis was called Devil's Band in Germany; in England where boys delight to smoke its dried stems, it gains besides the names of Smoking-cane or Tom-bacca, the ill-sounding title of Devil's Cut. As the plant Aconite is called Teufels-Wurz in Germany, so we find a species of Plumbago, on account of its acridity called Devil's Wort by the people of St. Domingo. In Mexico we meet with a plant (*Argemone Mexicana*), which bears the name of Devil's Fig, or *Figo del inferno*. It is a prickly plant, with yellow acrid juices, drops of which are sometimes administered by the native practitioners for the cure of ophthalmia. I have found two plants bearing the name of Devil's Apple. The Arabs give this name to the Mandrake, which they call *Tuphac-el-Sheitan*, because that plant was supposed to excite voluptuous emotions. It was on this account also that the Mandrake received the name of Love-apple. The word Tuphac or Tuffach corresponds with the Hebrew Tappuach, as Sheitan does with Sâtân. It may be well to remember this, as we shall meet with the word again. The other plant whose fruit bears the name of Devil's Apple is the Thorn-apple or Datura (another word of Arabic origin), the common kind of which has now become naturalized in Great Britain. It was in America, where it proved so troublesome a plant on the newly-cleared ground of the settler, and produced such extraordinary effects upon those who ate it, that this name was given to the Thorn-apple. There are various species, all of which possess the same peculiar properties, and curious tales are told respecting the conduct of persons who have partaken of the fruit. It is said that the soldiers sent out to Peru on one occasion to quell a rebellion, having eaten of it turned natural fools for several

days, and spent their time, some in blowing feathers into the air, others in a sitting posture grinning like monkeys, and others again pawing and fondling their companions with countenances so droll that the most stolid were provoked to mirth. In Japan the word for devil is *Oni*, and *Hari* means a needle. Hence Oni Hari means Devil's Needle, and this name is applied to a plant (*Bidens pilosa*) which bears, as the name implies, a number of hairs or needle-like projections, something similar to our own Venus' Comb or Shepherd's Needle, a plant which we, too, set apart for the use of the Evil One under the name of Devil's Darning-needles. I am not sure whether the Sting-Nettle has ever been consecrated to the devil or not (we used to call it Naughty Man's Plaything in Sussex); but the inhabitants of Timor, in the Malay Archipelago, call one kind *Daoun Setan*, or Devil's Leaf. Here we meet again with the word on which I laid stress above, as being the Semitic name for Devil—viz., Setan. The influence of the Arabs in the Archipelago was very strong in former times, and the religion of Mahomet has left very marked traces of its presence in the common expressions still in use among the people. As you walk along the palm-shaded avenues, or are driven by your Malay *syce* through the groves of pine-apple and banana, of cocoanut and mango, you will hear the familiar *Salaam*, which you first learned to pronounce, perhaps, as you passed down the Suez Canal and met the Arabs walking on the sandy desert when your vessel was hauled to; or you will hear the name of *Allah* invoked every time an oath is uttered by the profane and thoughtless native. But if the sting of an English nettle is not bad enough to make us regard the plant as peculiarly suited for the devil's nosegay, this is not the case with the nettle of Timor. One writer tells us of the effects which followed his being stung with a species of this plant (*Urtica crenulata*) on one occasion, as he was gather-

ing a specimen for his herbarium. The plant only touched the first three fingers of his left hand; it was seven o'clock in the morning,—the only time for prosecuting such pursuits in these intensely hot regions,—and the sensation was disregarded, as it was only like a slight pricking such as our own nettle might cause. But the pain gradually increased, and in an hour became well-nigh intolerable. It gradually extended up the arm, and by noon the effect upon the muscles was such that he feared lock-jaw would follow. These symptoms passed off at night, but during the whole day the pain was intense, and continued so more or less for nine days. The true Devil's Leaf produces effects more severe and dangerous still, and it is said that they have been known to affect the person for a whole year, or even cause death. In Warwickshire the Ground-Ivy is called Devil's Candlesticks, and as he generally gets about in the dark, it is doubtless necessary that he should sometimes be provided with some means of lighting up his pathway. In China there is a tale respecting the *Shui-mang* plant (probably the *Illicium religiosum*). This is a creeping plant of a poisonous nature, something like a bean, and produces a red flower which is similar to that of a bean. Those who eat of it die, and become *Shui-mang* devils, and the tradition is that such devils are incapable of being born again, unless they can find someone else who has also eaten of the same plant and is willing to take their place. It must be observed that in China disembodied spirits are supposed under certain conditions to be permitted to appropriate to themselves the vitality of some human being, who, as it were, exchanges places with the devil.

I must now briefly call attention to such names of plants as relate to heathen gods who were in various places regarded as personifications, confederates, or relatives of the devil, as the ruler of the powers of darkness, presiding over storms, diseases,

and various kinds of evils. In the chapter on "The Magic Wand" this subject is more fully discussed, but the names of these particular plants have not there been inserted. Let us begin with the devil as the Thunderer. I find the Ox-eye Daisy called Dun-daisy in Somerset, and this is neither more nor less than an abbreviation of Thunder-daisy, a name which is in use in the same county. But this same flower (*Chrysanthemum Leucanthemum*) is in Middlesex actually called Devil's Daisy. We have already seen that the Aconite was in Germany sacred to the devil; in Norway it is the property of Thor. Hence it is called Thor-hat and Thor-hjalm in that country, but in Denmark and Sweden it is Storm-hat, or, as in Holland, Wolf's-wort. We call it Monk's Hood, in reference to the hat-shaped flower, and Wolf's-bane. Mr. Thorpe suggests that this latter name is an allusion to Thor's combat with the wolf. Gerarde says it arose from the fact that "the hunters which seeke after woolfes, put the juice thereof into rawe flesh, which the wolfes devoure, and are killed"; while Mr. Fox Talbot says it arose from a confusion between the words bane and bean, leukos and lukos. Let the reader take his choice between these authorities, each one of which doubtless is right, at least in his own opinion. Mrs. Bray tells us that the people on Dartmoor fifty years ago had a plant which they called Thormantle, which was regarded as an excellent febrifuge, or fever medicine. The Thistle again was sacred to Thor, its blossom being supposed to receive its bright colour from the lightning, from which it consequently protected the person or building placed under its guardianship. "The disease known among the poorest classes of Poland as 'elf-lock' is supposed to be the work of evil demons, and it is said that if one buries thistle-seed it will gradually disappear. It is said to be produced from a thistle-seed, and old wives crush it off with a sharp stone." In Germany the Orpine is called

Thunder-plant, and the Ground-ivy is Thunder-vine, both pointing to Thor, the thunder god, as their patron. The Stonecrop, or Houseleek, was called Thunder-beard, and if planted on the roof of a house, it protected from the lightning's stroke, a property possessed also by the Hawthorn. In like manner the Laurel was regarded by the Romans as a preservative from the same evil, as was the White Vine if planted around a house; whilst we are told that Palm-branches laid upon coals are good for a thunderstorm. A shaggy, tangled, nest-like growth on boughs and rose-bushes, which in Somersetshire is known as Old Man's Beard, was in Germany ascribed to the generating power of lightning—or thunder rather, for the thunder was, as it still is in the East, most prominent; and this growth was called Thunder Besom. The Fumitory in Germany, and the Burdock in Denmark, were also the Thunderer's plants, and among the South Slavs the Iris was called Perun's flower. Perun, it must be remembered, is the Slavic Jove. The Oak, likewise, was consecrated to Perun, as it also was to Jupiter.

It is now time to give a brief glance at those plants which are in another way associated with the devil; I refer to those which instead of bearing his name or being employed by him for the accomplishment of evil are rather regarded as possessed of powers of exorcism. We must place in the front ranks the well-known St. John's Wort, which was known long ago as *Fuga dæmonum*, because it was regarded as a very dare-devil. In Russia a plant known as Certagon, which A. de Gubernatis calls "chasse-diable," is in like repute. Respecting this plant he tells us that he has received from a notable authority the following facts. The Certagon grows in the meadows and woods, is somewhat prickly, and has flowers of a deep blue hue. It is said to cure children of fear, a statement which reminds us that in China also, where there are different kinds of fear, that which

is produced by an evil spirit may be expelled by means of herbs. Another name for the plant is Ispalóh, and it has power to drive out the Evil One. The child possessed with the evil spirit producing fright, is bathed with water in which the herb has been boiled; or the plant may be simply placed under the pillow, as people do in England to frighten *bugs*. It might be fair to ask whether this custom may not have originated in some confusion of the word for an evil spirit—viz., bug or bogey, and the word for an unwelcome crawling insect. We all recal the words of Psalm xci. 5, as read in Matthew's Bible: "Thou shalt not nede to be afraied for any bugs by night." Du Cange cites an old author respecting the existence of a noontide demon, which used to be expelled by means of a bunch of herbs and the use of certain magic formulas, in whom the people of France in the Middle Ages used to believe. By some means St. John's Day has come to be popularly associated more closely with the devil than perhaps any other day in the year. On that day the plant consecrated to St. John is hung up or burnt for the destruction of evil, and as a safeguard against witchcraft, tempest, and other demoniacal evils.

In the neighbourhood of Mount Etna, the country-folk object to sleeping under the trees on that night, lest they should become possessed. It is believed that on this, the shortest night of the year, the demons inhabiting the trees and plants leave their places of abode, and enter into the first object with which they may come into contact. It is, however, possible, to drive them away from the neighbourhood after dark, and then it is quite safe to lie down as usual under the shade of the trees. The celebrated Mistletoe bough was famous "for further and more noble purposes than barely to feed thrushes, or to be hung up superstitiously in houses to *drive away evil spirits*,"

says Sir J. Colbach, by which we learn that great faith was put in this mystic plant, which might well share with the St. John's Wort the name of Devilfuge. Another plant possessed, according to popular belief, of the power of dispelling demons is the well-known Mugwort or Wormwood, which, on account of its association with the ceremonials of St. John's Eve, was also known on the Continent as St. John's Herb (Herbe de la Saint Jean) or St. John's Girdle. Garlands were made at that season of the year, composed of White Lilies, Birch, Fennel, St. John's Wort, and Artemisia or Wormwood, different kinds of leaves, and the claws of birds. These garlands, thus comprising seven different kinds of material, were supposed to be possessed of immense power over evil spirits. It seems as though almost every plant which has any association with St. John has also at some time or other been credited with the possession of supernatural powers, both among ourselves, and especially on the Continent. The plant Honesty, or Lunary, of which I have had more to say elsewhere, must be placed here, for it is one of those plants which "naturally possess the power of putting monsters to flight"; an idea which will be easily intelligible when we consider that, just as the Evil Ones avoid the light, so the Lunary (from *Luna*, the moon) represents it. The Evil Ones, or Spirits of Darkness, hate the light, neither will they come to it lest their deeds should be reproved. Another of these plants is the Archangel, which may have received its name from its being in blossom on the day of St. Michael the Archangel, and thence supposed to be a preventative against evil spirits and witchcraft. We are told respecting Herb Bennett, or the Blessed Herb (*Herba benedicta*), that "where the root is in the house, the devil can do nothing, and flies from it; wherefore it is blessed above all other herbs." Perhaps, as Dr. Prior suggests, the name of Avens, as applied to the same plant, has

some reference to this superstition. The four-leaved Clover, of which more will be said by-and-by, is, in consequence of its being in the form of a cross, supposed to be endowed with magical virtues, which render the person who has a piece of it on his person, capable of detecting the presence of evil spirits.

BLACK HELLEBORE (*Helleborus niger*).
a, plant in blossom; *b*, leaf; *c*, tubular petal; *d*, capsules.

The Jews in some places hang Aloes over their thresholds to keep away the evil spirits, just as the Chinese employ Moxa, Garlic, and other plants. The Black Hellebore or Christmas Rose, called Winter Rose in Devonshire, was used by the ancients to purify their houses, and to hallow their dwellings. They also had a belief that by strewing or perfuming their

apartments with this plant they drove away evil spirits. This ceremony was performed with great devotion, and accompanied with the singing of solemn hymns. In the same manner they blessed their cattle with the Hellebore, to keep it free from the spells of the wicked. Thus Virgil, in his *Pastorals*, sings :—

> "What magic has bewitched the woolly dams,
> And what ill-eyes beheld the tender lambs?"

For the purposes above described, the plant was dug up with many religious ceremonies. Sometimes a circle was first drawn around the plant with a sword, after which the person would turn to the east and pray to Apollo and Æsculapius (the god of medicine) for leave to dig up the root. Even till this day the stables in Italy are preserved from the power of demons and thunderbolts by means of a sprig of Juniper, just as our own stables and houses used to be preserved from the power of witches through the magic horse-shoe.

This leads us to remark, in conclusion, that the name of the Evil One is somewhat largely associated in one way and another with trees, as well as with flowers and plants. In Germany Devil's Oaks are frequently to be met with, and one of these at Gotha is held in high esteem. Many trees with which the name of Judas is associated are regarded with awe, on account of the connection with them of the devil. Thus in Bohemia the Willow is said to be the tree on which Judas hanged himself, whence the vulgar supposition that the devil has given it a peculiar attraction for suicides. Such also are the Carob or Locust Tree, the Aspen, and in some places the Fig,—the Poplar-leaved kind having been already referred to in this chapter. In Styria it is believed that the devil is abroad in great force on Bertha's night—January 6th; and that "one may then make a magic circle, and stand in the centre of it

with elderberries gathered on St. John's night. By this means he may obtain magic Fern-seed, which will come wrapped in a chalice cloth, and confer on one the strength of thirty or forty men." Another property of this Fern-seed is that it will enable the holder to discover hidden treasure,[6] and to unlock anything which may require opening. "It is one of the anomalies of tree-superstitions that the useful Walnut should have been associated with diabolism. It was thought to be the great enemy of the Oak in the North," and if "Oak and Walnut are planted near each other, it is said one of them must wither. Where the Church del Popolo at Rome stands was once a Walnut, in whose foliage the people believed demons had their abode. Paschal II. destroyed the tree, and the people built the church."

We have already seen that in the East there is a wide field for a study like this, and to it we are giving constant attention in the hope of being able to follow up the present work with one on Oriental Flower and Plantlore. Thus, flowers were required for the demon-worship which prevailed among the Singhalese previous to the introduction of Buddhism. Trees were consecrated to different demons by means of wreaths of flowers, as we learn from Sir J. Emerson Tennent's valuable work on Ceylon; and many strange ceremonies were gone through by the devil-dancers employed on various occasions, when wreaths and garlands of flowers were frequently in use. It thus appears that if theologians or sceptics endeavour to banish the devil from our midst, they will have plenty to do, for his name is too firmly associated with our popular plant names alone to be easily dislodged. Perhaps few of us who read this long list of names will assent to Mr. Conway's remark, that with the exception of "a few names given with humour rather than malevolence, as Devil's Apron and Devil's Leaf,

there are few which ever suggested diabolism." Our list is not perfect, but it contains *not a few* names which indicate most strongly the popular belief in a devil; and as many of us still feel troubled by his temptations, we are afraid it will be a long time before we shall arrive at the state recently described by a learned writer when he says that men are now "waking up from the *nightmare* of delusion respecting the existence of such a being."

It would have been quite in place here to have discussed those names of plants which, in popular parlance, refer to the devil indirectly by means of an euphemism. Thus we have, in addition to the Naughty Man's Plaything, already mentioned, a Naughty Man's Cherry. In the northern and midland counties various umbelliferous plants bear the name of Naughty Man's Oatmeal, a synonym for Deil's or Devil's Meal. Similarly the term Old Man in such names as Old Man's Nightcap, Old Man's Plaything, and Old Man's Mustard, doubtless refer to "the Old Boy himself." He surely cannot complain of want of attention, and we will therefore leave him now, to turn to a more agreeable subject.

HORSE CHESTNUT (*Æsculus Hippocastanum*).

a, spike of bloom; *b*, blossom; *c*, the same in section; *d*, fruit; *e*, seed; *f*, the same in section.

CHAPTER III.

THE VIRGIN'S BOWER.

WE have already said that the Clematis, or Old Man's Beard as it is often called, is also known as Virgin's Bower, and will now try to ascertain in this chapter something about the flowers and plants to which the Virgin lays claim. Before we go too far, however, it may be well to take note of one or two important matters. It must not be supposed, in the first place, that every plant which has the

name of Virgin or Mary connected with it, has in reality any relation to the name of the Mother of our Lord. For example, the name Rosemary, which some have taken to mean the Rose of the Virgin Mary, is in reality but an adaptation of the Latin Rosmarinus. In the Prolegomena to the *Catholic Annual*, as Hare tells us, it is asserted that the word Rosemary was altered into *rosmarinus* at the time of the Reformation, along with a number of other similar changes, in order to divert men's minds from the least recollection of ancient Christian piety. If this be so, how are we to account for the fact that the word *rosmarinus* occurs in such early Latin authors as Horace, Ovid, and Pliny, hundreds of years before the Reformers came into existence? An ancient writer explains the name by saying that Rosemary is the plant that grows by the sea (*mare*, from which *marinus* is derived). The explanation of the first syllable "rose," given by another writer, is that the plant is often seen glittering with dew (*ros*) on the shores of the sea. It is singular that Gay proposes a riddle, which he puts into the mouth of some shepherds, who say—

> "What flower is that which royal honour craves,
> Adjoin the Virgin, and 'tis strewn on graves?"

Here the flower craved by royalty is the Rose, to which the name of Mary must be added, in order to get the name of the plant, Rosemary, which it was customary in olden times to strew on the tombs of the departed. This riddle was a retort upon another which ran thus—

> "What flower is that which bears the Virgin's name,
> The richest metal joinèd with the same?"

to which the answer is, "Mary-gold." Dr. Prior tells us that it is no more correct to connect the name Virgin's Bower with Mary than it is to place the Rosemary in her bouquet. The name

was given to the Clematis by Gerarde, the famous old herbalist of the sixteenth century, "as fitting to be a bower for maidens, and with allusion, perhaps, to Queen Elizabeth, but not, as we might be tempted to imagine, to the Virgin Mary in a *riposo*, or resting scene on the way to Egypt, which is a frequent subject for pictures." But compare the German Jungferbogen.

Having placed ourselves on guard against this possible source of error, we may now ask why it is that around the Virgin's Bower so many different plants are found to cluster. And the answer will be an easy but significant one. In the old days before men had been brought so fully under the influence of the Reformation as they afterwards were, we find that in our own happy Fatherland, as well as on the Continent, certain plants and flowers were held sacred to the heathen deities of the classical Scandinavian mythologies. It will be sufficient to impress this fact when we remember that the names by which the days of the week are known by us were borrowed from these same gods. The first two days of the week were set apart to the sun and moon god, Tuesday was named after Tuisco, Wednesday after Woden, Thursday after Thor, the god of War and Thunder, and Friday after Freyja, with whom we are now more immediately concerned. For the historical and etymological questions which might be here raised, we must be content to refer to Grimm's "Teutonic Mythology." To Freyja, as to Venus, many plants were dedicated, for you must know that the ancients believed the plants to be under the rule of certain deities, and when the great goddess had laid a powerful hold upon men's minds, and her name had become associated with many common objects, she could only be banished from men's thoughts by transferring what had been sacred to her to the Virgin Mary. The Ladybird was once Freyja's own insect, and Orion's Belt, which in Sweden is still called Freyja's Spindle,

in Zeeland now belongs to her successor Mary. The same thing took place elsewhere. Heathen temples were transformed into Christian churches, and traditions which had once been associated with heathen deities, were now transferred to the saints of the conquering church.[1]

If we have been able to understand this, we shall now be prepared to gather the many plants which bear the name of Freyja, of Venus, and of Mary together, and make them twine around our Virgin's Bower. We shall find that the name of Venus still lives on, though that of Freyja is now no longer heard amongst us, except in the name Friday—*i.e.*, Freyja's day; but if in one place a plant still retains the name of the old Roman goddess, we shall almost certainly find the name of Mary taking its place elsewhere. An illustration will make this plain. Many of the names by which our commonest flowers are known are not confined to England, but crop up in Germany and Scandinavia in but slightly altered forms. Thus every boy and girl delights in plucking the pretty little flower (*Lotus corniculatus*) which grows in the meadows, and is known as Lady's

LADY'S SLIPPER (*Cypripedium Calceolus*).
a, plant; *b*, slipper; *c*, fruit; *d*, stamen.

Slipper, Shoes and Stockings, Butter and Eggs, Pattens and Clogs, or Boots and Shoes. In Germany, this flower is sometimes called Venus' Shoe (*Venus-Schuh*), but at others Mary's Shoe (*Marien-Schuh*) and Mary's Slipper (*Marien-Pantoffel*). How liberal we have been towards her ladyship will appear when I enumerate some of the plants with which she is honoured. Thus, as she reclines in her bower we provide her with boots and slippers for her feet, garters with which to keep her hose in place, and laces for her corset or shoes. We have found her a thimble and needle with which to sew, a smock and a mantle in which to garb herself, a cushion on which to recline, and a comb and looking-glass for her hair and tresses, with which we also have supplied her. Thus equipped, we find her a nightcap to keep her curls from being ruffled at night, and when she needs to write to her friends, we find her a seal or signet for her letter. She would be incomplete without fingers, and these we also provide, together with a navel, and a basin in which to wash. And having done all this, we plant around her bower trees, grass, whin, clover, cowslip, mint, bracken, foxglove, fern, and thistle, to make the garden gay. We further find her in gloves for her delicate fingers, eardrops to adorn her head, and a riband with which to tie back her hair or make up a sash. She is not then content without ruffles, and these, too, are found for her, and lest she should lose her money a purse is also provided; yet with all this lavish kindness we make her sleep on bed-straw.

We thus have here a brief summary of the more common plants devoted to the Virgin; now let us examine them a little more fully. Take first the articles of dress. The most familiar name here will be the Lady's Smock. In some places the wild Arum is thus called, whilst in other parts,—as, for instance, in some of the remoter districts of Devon,—the name is quite

unknown. During some country rambles in Somersetshire I found that the flowers of the Wild Convolvulus were called Lady's Smocks, a not inappropriate term, if we understand by smock the under garment of her ladyship; for she could not be supposed to dress in smock frocks such as the Sussex peasants still glory in. But it will be admitted that the plant which lays the most rightful claim to the name is the Meadow Cress, Cuckoo-flower, or Milkymaid, as my Devonshire friends call it (*Cardamine pratensis*). Prior suggests that this plant was so called from the resemblance of its white flowers to little smocks hung out to dry, as they used to be once a year, at that season especially. I do not feel very sure about this explanation, and the author of a work on Shakspere's plant lore, I find, also thinks the resemblance far-fetched. What is there about which Shakspere does not teach us something? Towards the end of *Love's Labour's Lost* he sings:—

"When daisies pied and violets blue
And lady's smocks all silver white
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue
Do paint the meadows with delight,
The cuckoo then on every tree
Mocks married men, for thus sings he,
Cuckoo.

"When shepherds pipe on oaten straws,
And merry larks are ploughmen's clocks,
When turtles tread, and rooks, and daws,
And maidens bleach their summer smocks,
The cuckoo then on every tree
Mocks married men, for thus sings he,
Cuckoo."

That our greatest dramatic poet should thus describe one of the most delicate and beautiful of our native plants, shows what charms vegetable beauties had for his capacious mind. The happy idea of silver-white (says an old writer) exactly describes

the tint of these flowers, some of which are nearly of a pure white colour, whilst others have that purple cast so peculiar to highly polished silver. It is very probable that the name of Lady's Smock is a corruption of "Our Lady's Smock," and it is supposed that "Our Lady" has been honoured by the dedication of the flower to her, because it comes into blossom about Lady-tide. But many flowers which do not blossom at that particular season have been claimed for her ladyship. As this plant flowers in April, and is in full beauty in May, it generally forms a conspicuous figure in the May-day garlands of our children. Walton notices this fact, for he says: "I could see here a boy gathering Lilies and Lady Smocks, and there a girl cropping Culverkeys and Cowslips, all to make garlands." Old Gerarde tells us that he writes the name "Ladie Smocks," because in Cheshire, his own native home, it was so called. Chatterton, in his admirable imitation of the older poets, also gives the same name and the same colour:—

> "So have I seen a Ladie Smock soe white
> Blown in the mornynge, and mowd down at night."

Her Ladyship is, moreover, favoured with a mantle, which flower in Sweden bears the name of *Mariekåpa* (Mary's Cape or Mantle), and in Germany that of *Marienmantel*, or *Frauenmantel*, an illustration of the statement already made, that many a flower bears the same name abroad, as that by which it is known amongst ourselves. The latter half of the name refers to the broad, indented leaves of the *Alchemilla*, which "before they be opened" (says Gerarde) "are plaited and folded together, not unlike the leaves of the mallows." In Iceland also this plant is sacred to the Virgin under the name of Mariastakker, which gives quiet sleep if placed under the pillow at night; and in Spain it is called Our Lady's Mantle (*Mante de Neustra Señora*).

In Mexico there is said to be a splendid plant (*Ipomœa*) whose azure blossoms are from four to five inches across, set so close together that hardly a leaf is to be seen. The whole plant resembles a blue cloak, whence its name of *Manto de la Virgin.* Our Lady has Boots and Shoes, or Shoes and Stockings, flowers too well known to need any description. The Ribbon-grass which grows in our gardens is called Lady's Ribands or Lady's Garters by some, whilst others know it under the name of Gardener's Garters or French Grass. Having adjusted her hose, the Virgin stoops to tie her laces; for the plant Dodder, whilst it is associated by some with the Evil One, is by others dedicated to Mary, and called Lady's Laces. As her Ladyship retires to rest, she is provided with a Nightcap, or, in fact, with more than one. In Wiltshire the flowers of the larger Bindweed or Wild Convolvulus serve this purpose, but in some places she wears blue in bed, being decorated, it is said, with Canterbury Bells for her nightcap. In Sussex, however, the flowers of the Convolvulus are called Old Man's Nightcap, just as the flowers of the White Campion are known as Grandmother's Nightcap. This will help us to understand how liable we are to get confused in describing plants by local or popular names, unless we can give some other clue; such as a description of the plant, or its scientific name, and no doubt some confusion exists respecting the Smock and Nightcap. The Virgin is expected to repair her own clothes, for in Somersetshire my friends told me that they found her in thimbles in the shape of the flowers of the Campanula.

There is a plant called Lady's Tresses, "from the resemblance of the flower-spikes, with their protuberant ovaries placed regularly one over the other, to a lady's hair braided." By some people the well-known Quaking-grass, or Dawdle-grass, as Sussex children call it, is called Ladv's-hair In Devon it is generally

known as Shaking-grass. But in addition to her tresses and her hair, the Virgin is provided with a wig, for she is supposed to be able to take off and put on her capillary decorations at will. There is the *Adiantum* or Maiden-hair, also called Venus'-hair, Our Lady's-hair, and Black Maiden-hair, on account of its fine stringy, hair-like stalks. This plant was called *Adiantum*, so we are told by the old Latin writer, Theophrastus, because its leaves when put in water continue dry; while the names *Kallitrichnon* (beautiful-hair) and *Polytrichnon* (much-hair) were given it because of its efficacy, as Pliny tells us, in beautifying and thickening the hair. These ideas doubtless sprang from the notion that what was *like* hair was *good for* hair. Lobel, whose name is preserved to us in the word Lobelia, tells us that in his time the name of *Mayden-heere* was given to the plant which is generally called Bog Asphodel, because the damsels of that day employed it for making their hair yellow. This fashion of dyeing the hair yellow was very prevalent in the Middle Ages; and even so late as Henry VIII.'s reign, Horman says, "Maydens were silke callis, with the wiche they keep in ordre theyr heare made yelowe with lye."

The plant usually known as Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*) was also called Maid's-hair "from its soft, flocculent habit" (says Prior), "like the loose, un-snooded hair of maidens, and its yellow colour, to which, as a beauty in the hair of women, such frequent allusion is made by Chaucer and other romance writers." Having alluded to the material with which the Virgin's bed is composed, let us look the question a little more fully in the face. It is only recently, and in our Western countries, that people have thought it necessary to employ feathers and swan's down, hair and spring beds, mattresses, and coverings. In China and India to-day men and women alike sleep on a wooden bench or bedstead, upon which there is simply placed

a mat made of rushes, split cane, or straw. In Palestine we hear of Christ commanding a poor creature whom He had healed to take up his bed and walk. This was the easiest thing in the world for an Oriental to do, and in China if you see a man going away from home for a day or two, he generally has his bed on his shoulders! Even in our workhouses we find straw still allowed as the only bed for the travellers who call for a night's lodging; at least such was the case a dozen years ago, when, in many places the stables into which the guardians' horses were placed on board-days were employed as lodging houses for such casual visitors; and it mattered not whether they were respectable or otherwise, men and women, utter strangers to one another were turned in alike to one stable, to do as best they could amongst the straw, with a tin jug of water and a slice of bread. I have no doubt that in many places things have much improved since then, but I speak here of facts which my personal knowledge of several workhouses and vagrant homes in one part of England supplies. Even our chopped straw, still placed in beds, is but a little refinement upon the old custom of using the uncut reed—as Devonshire folk and others call the whole straw. In Scotland the Highlanders used commonly to sleep on heath, and the bed thus made was said to be delightful. In Italy beds are often made of the leaves of trees instead of feathers or down. Amongst the Greeks it was quite an old joke against the effeminate Sybarites, that when one of them complained that he had not slept all night, the reason he assigned was that one of the rose-leaves upon which he slept had become folded under him, and so made a hard lump, reminding us of the pea and the princess in the fairy tale! Cicero reproached Verres with the extravagant luxury of making the tour of Sicily in a bower of roses, whilst his person was also decked and garlanded with

those flowers. The bed of roses is not altogether a fiction, as we learn from *Lalla Rookh.* The roses of the Sinan Nile, or garden of the Nile (says Moore), are unequalled; and from their leaves mattresses are made for the people of rank to recline upon. It is said that Cleopatra, whose name has become famous in England of late in connection with the Needle now standing on the Thames Embankment, once spent no less than £200 (or what would be equivalent to that amount) for the adornment of a room with roses for one night's pleasure. In India, however, to this day, people, from the Rajah to the peasant, when they are dying are placed on straw, in order that the spirit in its departure may not take the mat or bed upon which the person was lying along with it in its flight to the other world. In some parts of China a similar custom and superstition prevail. We have an expression still in common use which seems to point to the old custom of lying on straw, although some give the phrase another interpretation. We speak of one being "in the straw"; which Dr. Brewer says refers to the custom of placing straw in the streets to muffle the sound of the passing vehicles, but which more probably has reference to the fact that on particular occasions even ladies of rank used straw for their bedding. The name of Lady's Bedstraw, which was anciently Our Lady's Bedstraw or Bedstre, may allude more particularly to the Virgin having given birth to her firstborn son in a stable, with only the grass or herbs of the field for her bed. In fact, we know that in earlier times such materials were freely used, and the soft puffy stems of this particular plant, with its golden blossoms, would have exactly adapted it for a connection in legend with the Nativity. In Germany we find the same name given to this plant, but we shall have to refer to the continental names by-and-by.

Brand has the following remarks on this subject:—"In the

old herbals we find descriptions of a herb entitled *the Ladies' Bed-straw.* It appears that even so late as Henry VIII.'s time, there were directions for certain persons to examine every night *the straw of the king's bed,* that no daggers might be concealed therein. In 'Plaine Percevall, The Peace-maker of England,' printed in the time of Queen Elizabeth, we find an expression which strongly marks the general use of straw in beds during that reign: 'These high-flying sparks will light on the heads of us all, and kindle in *our bed-straw.*'"

Having noticed some of the articles of dress worn by Our Lady, let us now turn to those plants whose names refer to things ornamental and useful. I have referred to her hair; and since this must not go unkempt, there is a plant (*Scandix Pecten*) which, from the slender tapering beaks of the seed-vessels, set together like the teeth of a comb, obtains the name of Lady's Comb or Venus' Comb. The Teasel is, moreover, called Venus' Basin (Latin, *Veneris labrum*). Venus was the goddess of beauty, and from the fact that the hollows which are formed by the united bases of the leaves around the stem, are usually filled with water, this plant has been set apart for her use, especially as the water therein contained was supposed to remove warts and freckles, and so give freshness and beauty to the person. And in order that, after her bath, she might be able to admire her beauty, and arrange her raven, glossy, or golden tresses, the Campanula was set apart as Venus' Looking-glass. This name is thought by some to have been given to the flower, from the resemblance borne between the blossoms of the plant set upon their cylindrical ovary, and the round mirror used of old, and still to be obtained in the East, made of polished metal fixed at the end of a straight handle. Hare, however, suggests that the name was given it "from its spreading open so widely in the day-

time." Spenser in his *Faerie Queen* gives the name to a magic mirror, in which a lady lover might get a glimpse of her future husband. The flower is also commonly called Lady's Looking-glass. Another article, useful as well as ornamental, is the Lady's Seal or Signet, "a name that in the older writers is correctly given to a *Convallaria*, the plant now called Solomon's Seal, from round cicatrices on the root stock, which resemble the impressions of a seal, but which has been injudiciously transferred to a different plant, the Black Bryony, which has no such characteristic workings. This change seems to have been introduced by the herb-sellers, as the latter plant, the Bryony, is described by Fernelius and others as one which the herbalists designated the Seal of the Blessed Virgin." The "Grete Herbal" tells us "It is al one herbe, Solomon's Seale, and our Lady's Seale." I do not myself see much to object to in making the Black Bryony (*Tamus communis*) Our Lady's Seal, for if the root-stock (which comparatively few people ever examine) bears no resemblance to a seal, surely the pretty fruit is sufficient to lead any one with a little imagination, but no knowledge of botanical names, to attribute to this plant the name of Lady's Seal. But Hare, following Gerarde, assigns the name to a totally different origin. He says: "*Our Ladie's Seal* (*sigillum Mariæ*) is among the names of the black briony, owing to the great efficacy of its root when spred in a plaster and applied as it were to *seal up* a scar or bruise." I have left the learned writer's spelling as it appears in his Essays, for everyone is aware how strongly Mr. Hare advocated spelling reform. "In like manner" (he adds) "*Solomon's Seal* (*Sigillum Salomonis, Sceau de Solomon* in French, *Salomons-Siegel* in German, a name applied to the 'root of the white crawfoot'), was so called in part from having marks on the roots something like the stamp of a seal, but still more, as Gerarde maintains, 'of the singular

vertue that the root hath in *sealing* or healing up greene wounds, broken bones, and such like, being stampt and laid thereon.' Perhaps this was compared to the magical powers ascribed in the Arabian stories to Solomon's Seal."

The pretty Armeria (*A. maritima*), or Pink, as some people call it, is often known as Lady's Cushion. Perhaps it is better known under the name of Thrift, which in Sussex is corrupted to Swift. In Somerset it is called Cushings, a local form of Cushions.

Gerarde speaks of one kind of Pink thus: "There is a wilde creeping Pinke, which groweth in our pastures neere about London, and other places, but especially in the great field next to Deptford, by the path-side as you go from Redriffe to Greenwich, which hath many small tender leaves, shorter than any of the other wilde Pinkes; set upon little tender stalks which lie flat upon the ground, taking holde of the same in sundrie places, whereby it greatly encreaseth; whereupon doth growe little reddish flowers. The roote is small, tough, and long lasting."

The name of Lady's Cushion or Our Ladie's Cushion is applied to other plants besides the Armeria in different parts of England; a yellow-flowered creeping plant (*Fumaria*) often found on garden rockeries, and the wild Fingers and Thumbs or Boots and Shoes being amongst the flowers so called, but none so appropriately as the Thrift, with its soft cushion-like growth. I have said that there is a plant called Lady's Fingers; and that for the protection of the sewing finger, when the diligent Virgin is at work, a thimble is provided. For this purpose the flowers of the Campanula (*rotundifolia*) are employed. There is another kind of Campanula (*medium*), often called Coventry Bell, which Hare supposes gained its name from the Virgin, and which is called Mariet. This name is from the French Mariette, and I find that another French name for this flower, which in Latin, or Italian rather, is *Viola Mariana*,

is "Gant de Nôtre Dame," or Our Lady's Glove, a name which is also applied to the Foxglove. If Rosemary is not in reality the Virgin's property, the Costmary may possibly be, though this is not certain. Prior says that its Latin name of *Costus amarus* was misunderstood, and taken for *Costus Mariæ*, a name which refers to some aromatic plant unknown; and that the error very naturally arose "from this one having been dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene, and called after her, *Maudlin*, either in allusion to her box of scented ointment, or in reference to its use." However this may be, its German name of Frauenmünze (Lady's Mint, applied also to the Spearmint, with perhaps a pun on the word *Münze*, which our word "mint" exactly reproduces), is in favour of its being regarded as one of the plants sacred to the Virgin. This fact I find confirmed by an old German writer on this subject, as well as by the French name for the plant quoted below. This is the same herb as bears the name of Alecost, it having been at one time used for giving a bitter flavour to ale, which was then much relished. There is another plant, however, whose right to be called by her Ladyship's name no one disputes, I mean the Lady's Thistle (*Carduus Marianus*). Some writers are strongly in favour of regarding this variety of thistle as the true Scotch Thistle, an opinion which seems to be confirmed by a study of the old Scotch coins which bear a representation of the plant. The evidence drawn from this source, says one scholar who seems to be in a position to judge, tends "greatly to strengthen our belief that the *Carduus Marianus*, or Lady's Thistle, was the chosen emblem of the national pride and character, although it must be admitted that the resemblance between the plant and the picture of the artist is somewhat postulatory. The bold motto, 'Nemo me impune lacessit,' was the addition of James VI., and *Carduus Marianus* is almost the only species that would

naturally suggest it, or that really deserves it; but I suspect that the reason for the preference of this species as the emblem, was the fact of its dedication to the Mother of our Saviour, a drop of whose milk having fallen on the leaves, imprinted the accident in those white veins which so remarkably distinguish them." Those who read the anecdote relating to the Scotch Thistle given on another page will be able to see how easily the traditions might have influenced each other.

Brand tells us that the purple-flowered Lady's Thistle, the leaves of which are beautifully diversified with numerous white spots, like drops of milk, is vulgarly thought to have been marked by the falling of some drops of the Virgin Mary's milk on it, whence, no doubt, its name Lady's—*i.e.*, Our Lady's—Thistle. He adds that this was an ingenious little invention of the dark ages, which no doubt has been of service to the cause of superstition.[2] Prior shows us how this story probably came to be introduced. He is speaking of the White Lily, to which we shall have again to refer. This flower is sometimes called Juno's Rose; concerning which we are told that Jupiter, to make his son immortal, put him to the breast of Juno while she was sleeping. The milk which was spilt as the child withdrew from her formed the 'Milky Way' in the heavens, and gave rise to the Lily upon earth. The Romanist talemongers in all probability adapted this tradition to the Thistle, and so gave it the name which it now popularly bears. Hare, however, says one would rather believe that the name gave birth to the legend. This tale is parallel to one which is handed down by old Mandeville, the famous traveller and author, who, in his "Travailes," p. 85, says that at Bethlehem there is "a chirche of Seynt Nicholas, where oure Lady rested hire aftre sche was lyghted of oure Lord. And for as meche as sche had to meche mylk in hire pappes, that greved hire, sche mylked hem on the rede stones of marble; so that the traces may yit be sene in the stones

alle whyte." It should be observed that the French names (*Chardon de Nôtre-Dame* or *Chardon Marie*) and German names (*Frauendistel* or *Mariendistel*) exactly correspond with our own. In Cheshire there is a plant (*Pulmonaria*) called Lady's Milk Sile. The word *sile* is a provincialism for "soil" or "stain," and the name is said to be derived from a legend, still current in the country, that a portion of the Virgin's milk fell on the leaves, and so caused the spots which are now seen on their surface. I referred at the commencement of this chapter to the Marygold and Gray's rhyme respecting it. Now although the foreign names have no reference to the Virgin Mary, there seems to have grown up in the popular fancy an idea that she has some right to the flower,—an idea which is confirmed by the fact that the flower was sometimes called Mary-buds. Thus Shakspere, speaking probably of this flower, says :–

"And winking Mary-buds begin to ope their golden eyes."

Dr. Prior says the name would seem to have originated from the Anglo-Saxon Mear-gealla, the Marygold commonly found in our marshes, and in old writers spelt Mary Gowles, but this is doubtful.[8]

There is a curious plant (the Kidney-wort or Penny-hat, *Cotyledon Umbilicus*) which has gained the name of Lady's Navel, and we find that its cognomens indicate its early dedication to Venus. In German it is Venus-Nabel, a name which exists also in Greek and Latin. There are a number of flowers and plants which at first sight might appear to be more or less intimately associated by name with the Virgin, but which have actually no reference to her. Many flowers belonging to the Daisy and Chrysanthemum class, for example, bear such names as Maghet, Maids, or Maithes, the Greek and Latin equivalents of which mean Virgin, as do these; but with reference to quite a different subject. The same applies to the names Mather and Maudlin, the flower which

bears the latter name being sacred to another Mary—viz., Magdalene, and not to the Virgin Mary. Thus the Periwinkle was formerly known in France as *Pucellage*, or Virgin-flower. Who has not heard the old folk speak of the Fuchsia as the Lady's Eardrop? I distinctly remember when I was a lad going from time to time with my mother on a visit to my grandmother, an elderly lady, and one who was very proud of her flower-garden. She almost always took us to see her Lady's Eardrop, as she preferred to call her Fuchsia when it was in bloom. The older people in Devonshire still speak of the plant under the same name, and I was told on the borders of Dartmoor quite recently that it is not many years since Lady's Eardrop was the only name there known. In American works on Botany, too, the Fuchsia is often thus spoken of, the people who emigrated from England years ago probably carrying the familiar name with them, and clinging to it with amazing tenacity. The word "drop" here is the same as that which we find in the name "Snowdrop," which does not mean a drop of snow, but a snowy drop for wearing as an ear ornament. This flower, like the Primrose or Cowslip in Germany, has long been regarded as sacred, since it is one of the first signs of the returning life of spring, by its piercing the snow (as the French name of *perce-neige* teaches us) before the winter has yet fully passed away. It, too, was consecrated to the Virgin, for we are told that formerly on a certain day in each year the image of Mary was removed from the altars, and the place where it had stood strewn with snowdrops, emblems of purity and virgin chastity. Hence on the "Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin" (February 2nd), this flower is appropriately regarded as emblematic of Our Lady. Two hundred years ago a certain kind of Primula used to be known as Lady's Candlestick in the north of England, while another plant (*Gagea lutea*) was called Our Lady's Cowslip. I have

already remarked that we have a Lady Fern; besides this the Maidenhair variety is in some places called Maria's Fern, and in the countries further north will be found many names for this class of plants, which prove that they once belonged to Venus or Freyja, and have now been claimed for the Virgin. In Scotland we find one kind of fern called Lady-bracken. Yarrow has been known as Venus'-tree, as we learn from the following rhyme:—

"Thou pretty herb of Venus'-tree,
Thy true name it is Yarrow;
Now who my bosom friend must be,
Pray tell thou me to-morrow."

If this be repeated on going to bed by the maiden who wishes to see her future husband, he will appear to her in her dreams, provided she take an ounce of Yarrow sewn up in a piece of flannel, and put it under her pillow. Bits of seaweed called Lady's-trees are still placed upon little stands and used as ornaments for the chimney-piece of many a Cornish cottage, and these are supposed to protect the house from fire and other evils.

The use of the Rose during the month of May (the Madonna's month) is in Italy quite national. Every one has Roses in the oratory or on the table all the month through, and even the servants make it a matter of conscience to spend their money on these flowers during that month. "As an emblem of the Virgin, the Rose, both white and red, appears at a very early period, and it was especially so recognised by St. Dominic, when he instituted the devotion of the rosary, with direct reference to St. Mary. The prayers appear to have been symbolised as Roses. There is a story of 'a lordsman, who had gathered much goods of his lord's, and who had to pass with his treasure through a wood in which thieves were waiting for him.' When he entered the wood he remembered that he had not that day said 'Our

Lady's saulter'; and, as he knelt to do so, the Virgin came and placed a garland on his head, and 'at each ave she set a Rose in the garland that was so bryghte that all the wood shone thereof.' He was himself ignorant of it; but the thieves saw the vision, and allowed him to pass unharmed." The traditions connected with the Rose are legion, but in other parts of this work such as were thought appropriate for our subject have been introduced. To write them all would be impossible; but we may notice that "the Rose was held to be the favourite flower of Holda, often called 'Frau Rose,' or 'Mutter Rose.' It was partly transferred, as were other symbols of Holda, Freyja, and Venus, to the Madonna, who is frequently called by the Germans Marien-röschen. She dries her veil on a Rose-bush, which thenceforth bears no more Roses. But there has been a tendency to associate the White Rose with the Virgin Mary, that being chiefly chosen for her fête days; while the more earthly feelings associated with 'Frau Rose' are still represented in the superstitions connected with the Red Rose." These superstitions will be found recorded in their proper place. The Rose of Jericho has been called St. Mary's Rose, and tradition affirms that when Joseph and Mary were taking their flight into Egypt, one of these flowers sprang up to mark every spot where they rested. The property possessed by this plant, of expanding when in contact with water or other moisture, led to a superstitious regard being entertained for it, and it was believed that on the anniversary of the birth of Christ it would thus open its petals. It was called in mediæval times *Rosa Maria*, or Mary's Rose.

The Bleeding Nun (*Cyclamen europæum*) was formerly used as a charm against bad weather, but has, like many other flowers, been consecrated to the Virgin Mary. The Primrose is called Schlüssel-blume, or Key-flower, in Germany, two explanations being assigned for the name. Some say it refers rather to the

Cowslip, with its bunch of blossoms resembling a bunch of keys, while others think it has reference to some magic power possessed by the plant of discovering hidden treasure. "The myth, as told in various traditions, affirms that Bertha entices some favoured child by exquisite Primroses to a doorway overgrown with flowers. This is the door to an enchanted castle. When the Key-flower touches it, the door gently opens, and the favoured mortal passes to a room with vessels covered over with Primroses, in which are treasures of gold or jewels. When the treasure is secured, the Primroses must be replaced, otherwise the finder will be for ever followed by a black dog. This superstition survives in England only in the country name of the Cowslip, 'Fairy-cup'—*i.e.*, a cup holding Fairy gifts." Now we find that Holda or Bertha, or whoever it might be that laid claim to the flower in olden times has had to give place, and to-day the Primrose is in German called not only Key-flower, but Lady's Key (*Frauenschlüssel*), names applied to the Cowslip as well. Those mythologists who refer all such matters to the courses of nature, make this myth relate to the return of spring.

If we bear in mind that Freyja and Mary are in many respects to be regarded as but different names for one and the same mythological personage, we shall not be surprised to find that some Norse plants bear both these names, and the people regard them each as proper. "The beautiful Freyja, who has given to German women the appellation Frau, has left her name with the Freyja-hâr (*Supercilium Veneris*, a species of *Adiantum*). Odin's spouse, Frigga (the earth), has not only named a constellation in Sweden, where in some regions Orion is called Frigga's Rock,—*i.e.*, distaff,—but also the Orchis (*odoratissima*), which is called Frigghar-grass. Very many plants which were held sacred to the Norse goddesses had their names changed by the early Christians to honour the Virgin Mary. Thus Niörd's

Glove, and various species of Orchis, which have hand-shaped roots, are called also Our Lady's Hand, Mary's Hand, etc. It will be remembered that all the plants which have 'lady' in their names—Lady's Smock, Lady's Slipper, and the like—were consecrated to the Virgin Mary, or 'Our Lady,' and that many of the flowers so named had a pre-Christian sanctity is known."[4]

In the season when the Lily of the Valley was in bloom, it used to be customary to decorate the churches with these flowers, and when *Lady* chapels were erected in honour of the Virgin Mary they were adorned in the same way. But it was not the Lily of the Valley alone which was specially appropriated from among the various kinds of Lilies to her use. On the Continent any or all kinds of spring flowers were employed in decorating the churches in her honour, and this was the case also in England some years ago. "How soon flowers were used for ecclesiastical purposes in England it is difficult, nay impossible, to say. We know that gardens were devoted to the special cultivation of flowers for the churches. There was one, for instance, adjoining the *Lady* Chapel at Winchester, and the spot, for a long time after the destruction of the sacristy, went by the name of *Paradise.* And in his will Henry VI. left particular directions concerning a garden for the church of Eton College, 'which is left for to sett in certain trees and flowers, behovable and convenient for the service of the same church.' But the date of the foundation of the Winchester garden is unknown, whilst that of Henry VI. is, comparatively speaking, of recent date. No doubt the monasteries of the Middle Ages and the castles of feudal times had gardens attached to them." We read that William, Abbot of St. Albans, some six-and-a-half centuries ago (A.D. 1214—1235) appointed that "the wax taper, which we are accustomed to wreathe about with flowers, should be burnt before the beautiful image of Mary,

carved by Walter of Colchester, both day and night on the principal feasts and during the procession which is held in honour of the Blessed Virgin." One of the flowers specially devoted to "Our Ladie" was the beautiful White Lily (*Lilium candidum*). It is considered an emblem of purity and beauty, two traits specially characteristic of the Virgin, as people like fancifully to paint her.

WHITE LILY (*Lilium candidum*).
a, blossoms; *b*, bulb with roots.

"The lady lily, looking gently down,"

is scarcely less a favourite with the poets than the Rose itself, and has generally been regarded as the latter flower's nearest rival.

"The lily, of all children of the spring
The palest—fairest, too, where fair ones are."

The common White Lily is generally, though doubtfully, regarded as a native of the Holy Land, and it is therefore but natural that it should be looked upon as peculiarly appropriate for the Virgin's use. I have already recorded a curious tradition respecting this flower, and noted how that tradition, in all probability, affected the legendary lore of the Virgin. As the Snowdrop comes at the Purification (February 2nd), and the Marygold at the Annunciation of the Virgin, or Ladytide (March 25th), so the White Lily appears at the Feast of the Visitation

(July 2nd). This festival was instituted by Pope Urban VI. in commemoration of the journey taken by Mary to visit her cousin Elizabeth. In almost every case where representations of the event are made, the vase of White Lilies stands by the Virgin's side, with its three mystic flowers crowning their three stems. This is said to have been adopted in consequence of the miraculous appearance of three Lilies to confirm the faith of a master of the Dominican monks.[5] At the Nativity of the Virgin, a festival which dates from 695 A.D., the Bryony or Lady's Seal is regarded as her emblem, the Arbor Vitæ being dedicated to her on December 8th, the Feast of the Conception. Thus the Romish Church has linked her name with as many days and as many plants as possible. In another chapter I hope to be able to call attention to the May-day customs once so largely observed amongst ourselves and on the Continent. It will be sufficient here to remark that the month was once sacred to Flora, but that just as Mary usurped the place of Venus and Freyja, so she laid claim to the honours once paid to the heathen goddess of flowers; and May soon became known as the "Month of Mary," a name which it still bears in some countries where Romish influence has been strong. A relic of the old customs is yet retained in some of the villages and towns of our own happy England, where little girls still carry a doll in their Maypole or in a basket surrounded with flowers, ignorant that it is a remnant of a habit their ancestors had of carrying about an image of the Virgin Mary.

In France we find the plant Spearmint dedicated to the Virgin under the name of Our Lady's Mint (*Menthe de Nôtre Dame*), and in Italy it bears the similar name of St. Mary's Herb (*Erba Santa Maria*). I have already incidentally remarked that the Foxglove is sacred to her under the name of *Gant de Nôtre Dame*. In Germany we have many plants named after the Virgin, or Frau

Maria. Costmary, of which I have already spoken, is there Our Lady's Balsam (*Frauen-balsam*), or Lady's Mint, and the Maiden-hair is Lady's Hair (*Frauen-haar*). As in France, the Foxglove is Our Lady's Glove (*Frauen-handschuh*), and the Lungwort is Our Lady's Milk-wort or Wild-wort. The Genista is Lady's Slipper, and there is a plant called Lady's Glass. Very similar to the story related above respecting the Rose, is that told of the Iris or *Fleur-de-lis*, which shows us that in ancient times this plant also was considered peculiarly sacred to the Virgin. The legend is that of the knight who, more devout than learned, could never remember more than two words of the Latin prayer which was offered to the Holy Mother. These were *Ave Maria*, and it was in these words that he continually addressed his prayer to Heaven. Night and day his supplication continued, until at last the good old man died and was buried in the chapel-yard of the convent, where, as a proof of the

FLAG (*Iris germanica*).
With seed capsules in section.

acceptance which his brief but earnest prayer had gained at the hands of the Virgin, a plant of *Fleur-de-lys* sprang up on his grave, which displayed on every flower in golden letters the words *Ave Maria.* This strange sight induced the monks, who had despised him during his lifetime on account of his ignorance, to open his grave. On doing so they were surprised to find that the root of the plant rested on the lips of the holy knight, whose body lay mouldering there.[6]

On the Continent the Juniper is also regarded with great veneration, because, as the tradition affirms, it saved the life of the Madonna and the infant Jesus when they fled into Egypt. In order to screen her son from the assassins employed by Herod to put the children of Bethlehem to death, the Virgin Mother is said to have hid him under certain plants and trees, which naturally received her blessing in return for the shelter they afforded. Among the plants thus blest (says A. de Gubernatis), the Juniper has been peculiarly invested with the power and privilege of putting to flight the spirits of evil, and destroying the charms of the magician. There is, in Tuscany, a little plant which grows on the walls, whose tiny flowerets are of a whitish rose colour; it is gathered on the morning of the Ascension, and suspended on the walls of the chamber till the 8th of September, which is the Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin. This plant is known as the Madonna's Herb, and as it will frequently come into blossom after it has been gathered, the people regard it as enjoying the special protection and blessing of Our Lady. If the plant, after being gathered, should refuse to blossom, and begins at once to wither, the omen is significantly bad. At Sarego the Herb of the Madonna is gathered only on the Day of the Assumption, and it is then regarded as capable of curing a great variety of complaints. In Germany, as Mons. de Gubernatis informs us, a certain fern (*Polypodium vulgare*), which in France goes by the name of

Marie bregne, is said to spring from the Virgin's milk, a tradition we have already met with in connection with other plants. In the Province of Bellune in Italy the Mayweed (*Matricaria*), which among the Athenians was consecrated to Athene, receives the name of St. Mary's Herb. *We* have handed it over to Mary Magdalene. It is related that when Pericles was building the Propylæum, one of the workmen fell from the roof and died. Pericles was in great distress, till Athene appeared to him in a vision, and informed him that this plant would restore the inanimate corpse to life. From that day forth the herb, called Parthenon, or Virgin-plant, by the Greeks, was dedicated to the goddess who had made the revelation, and was suspended on the walls of the Athenian Acropolis. Nearly three hundred years ago (in 1591) a German scholar named Bauhin wrote a work on the plants whose names have been derived from the gods and saints, and amongst other plants dedicated to the Virgin he, strange to say, mentions the Rosemary. There seems to be but little doubt that even in those times, on the Continent, there had arisen some confusion in the minds of people generally between the name of this plant and that of the Madonna; and that confusion would be increased, and the idea that the Rosemary was Mary's plant be confirmed, by the

POLYPODIUM (*Polypodium vulgare*).

a, plant; *b*, seeds.

similarity of the leaves to those of the Juniper, which, as we have seen, was regarded abroad as sacred to the Virgin. In addition to those plants which I have already mentioned,—the Thistle, Campanula, Foxglove, Lady's Slipper, Mint, Costmary, etc.,—he also enumerates the following:—The well-known Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*), which bears a cluster of yellow flowers at the top of a thickly-foliaged stem; the Peachwort, a plant which gets its name (*Polygonum Persicaria*) from the resemblance of its leaves to those of a peach; Hemp Agrimony (*Eupatorium*), which also goes by the name of St. John's Herb; with the Yarrow, and a number of others whose names are not sufficiently familiar to be inserted here, but which I have given in a note in order to make the list as complete as possible.[7] Even the Ivy-leaved Toad-flax and St. John's Wort have found their way into this group, as have also the Lion's Foot and Drosera.

No one will object to the Strawberry being devoted to the Virgin, for with all her flowers she seems to have laid claim to but very few fruits. Some very beautiful German legends are said to be connected with this plant, the fruit of which was a favourite of the goddess Frigga, who presided over marriages. She was said to go a-berrying with the children on St. John's Day, as the Virgin was also in later times supposed to do; consequently on that day no mother who has lost a little child will taste a strawberry, for if she did her little one would get none in Paradise. Mary would say to it, "You must stand aside, for your mother has already eaten your share, and so none remains for you!" In Scotland we meet with another fruit which has received the Virgin's name. In the Isle of Harries there is a variety of nuts (says one writer) which go by the name of Molluka Beans, some of which are used as amulets against witchcraft or an Evil Eye, the white ones being particularly potent for these purposes. On this account they are worn about the neck by children, and it

is said that the nut will turn black as an indication of evil intended against them. There is a tradition that on one occasion the cows belonging to a certain gentleman gave blood for several days instead of milk, which one of the neighbours declared to be the effect of witchcraft. In order to remove the evil, it was suggested that a white nut, such as has been described, should be placed in the pail into which the cows were milked. This bean was called the Virgin Mary's Nut; and when it was first placed in the pail the cow gave forth blood, which changed the colour of the nut to a dark brown. The nut was used again, and all the cows gave pure milk. The writer whom I have quoted says that this very nut was given to him by the steward of Harries, and that when he wrote his book he still had the charm in his possession.[8]

But I must not enlarge; many flowers doubtless still remain unnoticed, but the most important have received attention. "All flowers, indeed, are said to be dedicated to her (the Virgin); hence the varied groups which fill the continental churches during her month—the month of May; and hence the wreaths of all kinds and colours with which the Flemish painters delighted to encircle their pictures of the Mother and Child. But there are many with which "Our Lady's" name is, in one form or another, directly connected. To us these plants now suggest the Virgin only; but long before the first Christian teachers made their way to the shores of northern Europe, they had been connected with some great female divinity, whose name is still here and there retained. Although it is not always easy to account for the attributes of mystery or of magical power assigned to the sacred plants of the ancient world, Freyja's plants are generally marked so distinctly by colour or by peculiar form, as to point out at once the cause of their selection. In some cases the purity of the flower rendered the change to the patronage of the Virgin

specially appropriate; but she seems to have taken the place of the heathen goddess as a matter of course, just as Thor and Odin were replaced in a similar manner by St. John or St. Christopher. The two flowers, however, which beyond all others are connected with the Virgin,—the rival queens of the garden, the Lily and the Rose,—had been dedicated to her in the East, whilst Freyja was still presiding undisturbed over her own woods and moorlands; although the same change may be traced in the history and appropriation of both flowers after the northern world became Christian." With this excellent summary, for which we beg to thank Mr. King, we may venture to leave this subject to our readers, who will be enjoying the cooling shade of the Virgin's Bower.

PRIMULA AURICULA.

CHAPTER IV.

BRIDAL WREATHS AND BOUQUETS.

WHAT pictures have been drawn by aspiring young ladies, as they have read the particulars respecting the wedding of some fashionable young bride, dressed out in silks of costliest kind, and decked with wreaths of Orange blossom and Jasmine! Such shall be my dress, and those the flowers I will choose when I am married, say they; and what bouquets my friends will send me! If the reader's lot should

be cast at the time when that happy event takes place, as mine was, in a foreign land, it is possible that considerable modification will be necessary in arranging the trousseau and other details connected with the wedding ceremony. Imagine yourself, gentle reader, perched up in a Sedan chair on the shoulders of Chinese coolies, and trotting along single file, chair behind chair, to the church door! The carriage and pair of greys, the livery servants, and the throng of loving friends may be all wanting; and perhaps for a bridal bouquet you will find yourself sprinkled with rice, and sent on your way, as I was, by the virtue of an old shoe! And yet what pleasant recollections one has of the happy event! It was in Hong Kong that a celebrated German sinologue, Dr. Eitel, and his amiable family, provided our wedding breakfast, and that learned divine quite upset our matrimonial gravity when he came to set us off for our honeymoon by throwing his slipper at our heads! Such was our bridal bouquet, and highly we prized it. But we shall see that flowers have been largely used in connection with weddings in our own land, and illustrations of the subject may be drawn from the flower lore of other countries as well.

In France it used to be customary for the bridegroom to send his bride every morning until the wedding day a nosegay of the finest flowers of the season. An interesting story is told respecting the Duke de Montausier and Julia de Rambouillet. The gallant duke after his betrothal to Julia is said not to have been contented with the mere observance of the beautiful custom just referred to, but had painted on vellum by the best artists of the day, in a folio volume magnificently bound, the finest cultivated flowers which could be obtained. In addition, all the most distinguished poets then living divided among themselves the task of making verses upon the flowers. The celebrated Corneille wrote for the Orange Flower and the Everlasting. On

her wedding day the duchess found this treasure on her toilet-table, and great was the value she set upon it. During the French Revolution, however, this interesting monument of love and gallantry of the seventeenth century was transported to Hamburg, where it was put up for sale in the year 1795.

Orange blossoms are naturally associated by us with weddings. Their delicate purity and fragrance specially adapt them for such an honoured place. Dr. Brewer gives us the following information respecting Orange blossoms worn at weddings:—"The Saracen brides used to wear Orange blossoms as a sign of fecundity: and occasionally the same emblem may have been worn by European brides ever since the time of the Crusades; but the general adoption of wreaths of Orange blossoms for brides is comparatively a modern practice, due especially to the recent taste for flower language. The subject of bridal decorations being made a study, and the Orange flower being found suitable, from the use made of it by the ancient Saracens, it was introduced by modistes as a fit ornament for brides. The notion once planted soon became a custom, now very general, adopted by all brides who study the conventions of society, and follow the accepted fashions." Some writers have supposed that Orange blossoms were introduced rather for their beauty than for any symbolical reason, although the fact that in the East one may often see the orange-tree blossoming and bearing ripe fruit at one and the same time, might naturally suggest to the emblem-seeking Oriental the idea suggested above.

> "These rapid fly, more heard than seen
> Mid orange-boughs of polished green,
> *With glowing fruit, and flowers between*
> *Of purest white.*"

We find the fruit also associated with the hymeneal altar, for the Orange is by many supposed to be the golden apple presented

Imperfect Bound 1912

to Jupiter by Juno on the day of her nuptials. These apples could be preserved nowhere but in the gardens of the Hesperides, where they were protected by three nymphs bearing that name, the daughters of Hesperus, and by a more effectual and appalling guard, a never-sleeping dragon. It was one of the labours of Hercules to obtain some of these golden apples. He succeeded, but as they could not be preserved elsewhere, it is said they were carried back again by Minerva.[1]

Our English customs have altered largely within the last hundred years. It is only half a century ago that a learned writer contrasted Continental with English fashions in the following words:—"The bouquets offered for sale at Ghent are both numerous and beautiful, it being a common practice there to carry a flower, not only on the promenade, but also to the church.

"'As the world leads we follow.'

"Fashion does not at present sanction any but coachmen in wearing nosegays in this country," an exclusiveness which we have happily banished—flowers having been of recent years employed by everyone. In olden times Rosemary was entwined in the wreath worn by the bride at the altar, and when so employed was frequently first dipped in scented water. We read that one of the unfortunate wives of Henry VIII., Ann of Cleves, wore it at her wedding. We find the following description of a bride of the sixteenth century, in a curious account of her procession to church:—"The bride, being attired in a gown of sheep's russet and a kirtle of fine worsted, attirèd with abillement of gold, and her hair, yellow as gold, hanging down behind her, which was curiously combed and plaited. . . . She was led to church between two sweet boys, with bridelaces and Rosemary tied about her silken sleeves. . . . There was a fair bride-cup of silver gilt carried before her, wherein was a goodly branch of

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Rosemary, gilded very fair, and hung about with silken ribands of all colours." In an account of the games and sports which celebrated a rustic bridal (or bryde-ale, according to etymology) at Kenilworth Castle, in the presence of the Good Queen Bess, we find these words in allusion to Rosemary:—"Thus they were marshalled; first, all the lads of the parish; sutablie every wight with hiz blu buckeram bridelace upon a branch of green broom,—because Rosemary iz skant thear,—tyed on hiz

CARNATION.

leaft arm. . . . After theeze, a gentle cup-bearer to beare the bride-cup, formed of a sweet sucket barrell" (a vessel employed for containing sweet-meats), "all seemly besylvered and gilt, adourned with a beautiful braunch of broom, gayly begilded for Rosemary." This plant stood symbolically for remembrance, and in the bridal wreath "it silently bade the bride bear away to her new home the remembrance of the dear old roof-tree which had sheltered her youth, and of the loving hearts which had cherished her." A quaint old writer remarks: "I meet few but are struck

with Rosemary; every one asked me who was to be married."

> "Know, varlet, I will be wed this morning;
> Thou shalt not be there, nor once be graced with
> A piece of Rosemary."

In Drayton's "Pastorals" we find the following passage:—

> "He from his lass him lavender hath sent,
> Showing her love, and doth requital crave;
> Him Rosemary his sweetheart, whose intent
> Is that he her should in remembrance have."

Shakspere and others of our old poets repeatedly speak of Rosemary as an emblem of remembrance, and as being worn at weddings to signify the fidelity of the lovers. The words of Ophelia have been often quoted, but may here be inserted:—

> "There's Rosemary for you, that's for remembrance:
> I pray you, love, remember."

In the *Winter's Tale* also we hear one say:—

> "For you there's Rosemary and Rue, these keep
> Seeming and savour all the winter long;
> Grace and remembrance be with you both."

As so much has been written respecting this plant, I have thought it best to turn now to another, reserving other remarks on the Rosemary till we get a little further on in the chapter.[3]

Among the Romans the Hazel was intimately connected with weddings, for they had, we are told, an ancient custom of burning Hazel torches during the evening of the wedding day to ensure a peaceful and happy union of the couple. The Greek bride was sometimes decked with a sprig of Hawthorn, boughs of which were also placed upon the bridal altar full of blossoms, as an emblem of the flowery future they anticipated. It has

been well said that it would have been more poetical, but much less true to life, had they chosen a plant without thorns. But the wisdom of the Greek will surely commend itself to us, when we think how the fairest and tenderest form is torn and scratched in its progress through this changeful life. Flowers there may, and always should be in the bride's new life, but it seems needful that thorns also should sometimes show themselves, to wean our affections from earth, and lead us to think more frequently of the place where tears shall all be wiped away.

In some parts of India the bridegroom stands, on the day of the wedding, in a basket made of bamboo by the side of his bride, who stands in another. He then takes up a basket of rice and pours it over her head. The further elucidation of this and other Eastern customs must be reserved for treatment in my work on "Oriental Flower-lore," but it will here be in place to notice how similar this practice is to one still kept up in some parts of England. "The curious old custom of showering grain over a couple newly married, is a common accompaniment of weddings in Bristol (and I may add in other parts of Somersetshire and Devon, as well as very generally elsewhere). Rice is used for convenience, but wheat was of old the chosen grain. When Henry VII. brought his bride to Bristol on the se'nnight following Whitsunday 1486, a baker's wife cast out of a window a great quantity of wheat, crying 'Welcome! and good luck!' This morning, April 10th, 1880, young girls and women were rushing into grocers' shops in the neighbourhood of the Broad Quay to buy each a quarter of a pound of rice, with which to salute a quay lumper and his bride as they came out of church. Yesterday the newspaper, recounting certain ceremonies connected with a fashionable wedding at Clifton, states that rice was freely thrown over the bridal party as they left the church. The practice is without doubt a survival of Roman occupation,

and it is commonly practised elsewhere." In some places rice has given way to small sugar-plums, and infinite amusement is caused thereby when the young folk in the neighbourhood appear on the scene. Corn comes into consideration here under another form. In *Frithiof's Saga* we read:—

> "Far on a foray
> Fights puissant THOR, but
> Welcomes with wine-cup
> ALL-FATHER'S wink.
> FREY round the Chieftain's
> Crown plaiteth corn-ears,
> FRIGGA binds bright-hued
> Blue-flow'rs among."

Here reference is made to the custom of employing corn-ears in connection with the bridal wreaths of the ancients, and a note on the passage refers us to Brand's "Popular Antiquities," where we are told that in Engnald, in the time of Henry VIII., the bride wore a garland of corn-ears. Brand also quotes more than one authority for the custom of sprinkling wheat upon the head of the bride. Herrick refers to this when, speaking of the bride, he says:—

> "While some repeat
> Your praise, and bless you, *sprinkling you with wheat.*"

Sometimes the garlands were made of ears of wheat "finely gilded."

We have already learned from Drayton and others that in England as well as in France flowers were freely passed between unmarried couples after their betrothal, and this is confirmed by many of our early writers as well as by modern custom. We recollect being acquainted some years ago with a young gentleman and lady in Sussex who had fallen in love with each other, and can remember having frequently seen the former

come home from his country walks during the spring tide with bouquets of primroses, violets, and other wild flowers of the season for his intended bride. Brand says: "It appears to have been formerly a custom also for those who were betrothed to wear some flower as an external and conspicuous mark of their mutual engagement; the conceit of choosing such short-lived emblems of their plighted loves cannot be thought a very happy one. That such a custom, however, did certainly prevail, we have the testimony of Spenser, in his *Shepheard's Calendar for April*, as follows:—

> "'Bring coronations and sops-in-wine
> Worn of paramours.'

"Sops-in-wine were a species of flowers among the smaller kind of single Gilliflowers or Pinks." The name seems to have been given to the Clove-pink or Clove Gilliflower (*Dianthus Caryophyllus*) on account of the flowers having been used in flavouring wine, as we learn from the following lines of Chaucer:—

> "There springen herbes grete and smale,
> The licoris and the set-ewale,
> And many a clove gilofre,
> And notemuge to put in ale,
> Whether it be moist or stale."

The following quaint lines from Quarles' *Shepheard's Oracles* (1646) have an interesting bearing on the early use of flowers in connection with love matters, and have been taken from Brand's "Popular Antiquities," with the italics as there found:—

> "The musick of the *oaten reedes* perswades
> Their hearts to mirth.———
> And whilst they sport and dance, the love-sick swains
> Compose *rush-rings* and *myrtle-berry* chains,
> And stuck with glorious *king-cups*, and their bonnets
> Adorned with *lawrell-slips*, chaunt their love-sonnets,

To stir the fires and to encrease the flames
In the cold hearts of their beloved *dames.*"

Some of my readers will call to mind the time when they used to regard a peascod with nine peas in it as lucky, and will remember the excitement caused by the young people of the family searching all through the basket of gathered peas for one which seemed likely to contain the real number. It will not now be so generally known, however, except among students of folklore, that there used to exist a custom in our own country years ago called Peascod Wooing, in which the peascod was employed by youthful lovers. Brand says: "Mr. Davy, of Ufford, in Suffolk, informs me that the efficacy of peascods in the affairs of sweethearts is not yet forgotten among our rustic vulgar. The kitchen maid, when she shells green peas, never omits, if she finds one having *nine* peas, to lay it on the lintel of the kitchen door, and the first clown who enters it is infallibly to be her husband, or at least her sweetheart. Anderson mentions a custom in the North of a nature somewhat similar. A Cumbrian girl, when her lover proves unfaithful to her, is, by way of consolation, rubbed with peas-straw by the neighbouring lads; and when a Cumbrian youth loses his sweetheart, by her marriage with a rival, the same sort of comfort is administered to him by the lasses of the village." Now since personal testimony in such matters will often be of far more interest and value than many quotations from other works, I may here remark that only a few years ago when I lived in Sussex the custom of divining who one's lover should be by means of a peascod still existed. I am well acquainted with a lady, herself but little over thirty years of age, who says that when she was a girl, which you see could not be many years ago, she used to follow the custom then common in her native village a few miles from Hastings, of placing the first peascod she could find containing

nine peas on the top of the door. The first swain who entered without shaking the green pod or husk from its perch was to be the damsel's bridegroom. It is to be observed that the peascod was not put on the lintel, but on the swinging door. Surely every young man must have shaken down the pod, for my lady friend has never yet found one who reached the standard of excellence she required! "Our ancestors were frequently accustomed in their love affairs to employ the divination of a peascod, by selecting one growing on the stem, snatching it away quickly, and if the good omen of the peas remaining in the husk were preserved, then presenting it to the lady of their choice." In Browne's "Britannia's Pastorals" we find the following lines which illustrate this curious custom :—

> "The peascod greene, oft with no little toyle,
> He'd seek for in the fattest fertil'st soyle,
> And rend it from the stalke to bring it to her,
> And in her bosom for acceptance wooe her."

Shakspere of course has a reference to the subject, which is thus referred to by Touchstone in *As You Like It*, ii. 4. "I remember, when I was in love, I broke my sword upon a stone . . . and I remember the wooing of a peascod instead of her, from whom I took two cods, and, giving her them again, said, with weeping tears, 'Wear these for my sake.'"

We have to be careful not to make all fish which comes into our net, for notwithstanding the plausible claim which the *Truelove* (or Herbparis) would seem to have upon its very face to a place in our Bridal Bouquet, we are obliged to refuse it admission here, if its plea rest on its name alone. The name comes from the Danish *Trolove*, to betroth or affiance, in which word we find a reference to the old custom once observed by that people, as well as by the Scotch and English, of making a curious kind of knot as an emblem of plighted fidelity. Now

the leaves of Herbparis have much the appearance of a true-love knot, and from this fact the plant has obtained its popular name. It bears other names, such as One-berry, Four-leaved Grass, and Leopard's Bane.

It was once customary for slighted lovers to wear a Willow Garland as a symbol of their grief; at least the poets make them do so, and they had good reason for their choice of such an emblem. Thus Drayton:—

> "In love the sad forsaken wight
> The Willow garland weareth;"

a sentiment which is also echoed in the following lines from another poet:—

> "But since my sister he hath made his choise,
> This wreath of Willow, that begirts my browes,
> Shall never leave to be my ornament,
> Till he be dead, or I be married to him."

Shakspere has at least half-a-dozen references to this custom, but we are unable to find room for any further extracts. In a note by Dr. Kennett, appended to Aubrey's "Remaines of Gentilisme and Judaisme," we read that "The young man whose late sweetheart is married to some other person does often in a frolique literally wear a Willow Garland, as I have seen in some parts of Oxfordshire."[3] On the wedding day we are told: "At Rome the manner was that two children should lead the bride, and a third bear before her a torch of Whitethorn in honour of Ceres, which custom was also observed here in England, save that in place of the torch there was carried before the bride a basin of gold or silver; a garland, also, of corn-eares was set upon her head, or else she bare it on her hand." In India—at least in some parts, for in an empire so vast as it is, customs necessarily vary

—the youthful brides on the wedding day bring garlands of flowers and cast them around the necks of their lords, and prepare the indispensable Betel for their use. In return the bridegrooms decorate their brides with lovely flowers, and so the festivities of the wedding are kept up. In Brand's "Popular Antiquities" there is a long account of the custom originally observed of strewing herbs, flowers, or rushes before the bride and bridegroom on their way to church, of wearing nosegays on the occasion, of the employment of Rosemary and Bay, and the use of garlands; and my friend, Mr. Jones, F.S.A., has written on kindred subjects in his interesting compilation of "Credulities Past and Present." From these and similar works we glean the following facts, and, whilst we cheerfully acknowledge our indebtedness to the authors mentioned, we can confidently recommend their works to those whose curiosity leads them to desire a fuller and more intimate acquaintance with these interesting matters. "There was anciently a custom at marriages of strewing herbs and flowers, as also rushes, from the house or houses where persons resided, to the church. The following is in Herrick's *Hesperides*:—

> "Glide by the banks of virgins then, and passe
> The showers of roses, lucky foure-leav'd grasse:
> The while the cloud of younglings sing,
> And drown ye with a flowrie spring!"

An old work published in 1615 has the following lines:—

> "All haile to Hymen and his marriage day,
> Strew rushes, and quickly come away;
> Strew rushes, maides; and ever as you strew,
> Think one day, maides, like will be done for you."

Shakspere, too, refers to the custom in the line "Our *bridal flowers* serve for a buried corse." Many are the references, poetical and prose, which we find in the writers of the fifteenth

to those of the eighteenth century; and it would be impossible to give more than one or two of them as samples. In "Ram Alley, or Merry Tricks," two persons are introduced "strawing hearbes." One then addresses the other with the words:—

> "Come, straw apace; Lord, shall I never live
> To walke to church on flowers? O 'tis fine
> To see a bride trip into church so lightly,
> As if her new choppines would scorn to bruze
> A silly flower."

And another work, dated 1671, thus speaks of the fashion:—

> "Suppose the way with fragrant herbs were strowing,
> All things were ready, we to church were going;
> And now suppose the priest had joyn'd our hands."

One other instance may be quoted, which tells us that—

> "The wheaten ear was scatter'd near the porch,
> The green broom blossom'd strew'd the way to church."

Nor were flowers or herbs alone employed for scattering on the path to be trodden by the happy pair. Nosegays or posies were also used on the festive occasion, and among the flowers employed for forming them, old writers mention Primroses, Violets, and Maidens'-blushes. One only quotation must suffice, in which Herrick gives us some racy notes, played on the names of the flowers selected for bridal bouquets.

> "Strip her of spring-time, tender whimp'ring maids,
> Now autumn's come, when all those flow'rie aids
> Of her delayes must end: dispose
> That lady-smock, that pansie, and that rose,
> Neatly apart;
> But for prick-madam and for gentle-heart,
> And soft maiden's-blush, the bride
> Makes holy these, all others lay aside."

Reference was made on p. 113 to the Rosemary; and it may not

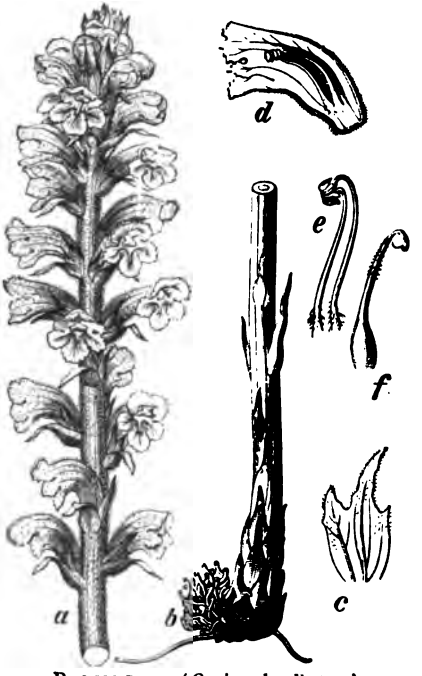
be out of place here once more to refer to its use. In a curious wedding sermon by Roger Hacket, 1607, entitled, "A Marriage Present," he thus expatiates on the use of Rosemary at this time. "The last of the flowers is the Rosemary (Rosmarinus, the Rosemary, is for married men), the which by name, nature, and continued use, man challengeth as properly belonging to himselfe. It overtoppeth all the flowers in the garden, boasting man's rule. It helpeth the braine, strengtheneth the memorie, and is very medicinable for the head. Another property of the Rosemary is, it affects the hart. Let this Rosmarinus, this flower of men, ensigne of your wisdome, love, and loyaltie, be carried not only in your hands, but in your heads and harts." We may admire the preacher's ingenuity, but we cannot praise him for his Latinity. If he was aware that *marinus* was connected with the sea (*mare, maris*), and not with man (*mas, maris*), he would surely have told us so, but as it is, he misleads his readers entirely; and how can we reconcile what he says about the Rosemary being "the flower of men," with the popular saying that where Rosemary grew the *woman* ruled? An old ballad, called *The Bride's Good-morrow*, contains the following stanza:—

"Young men and maids do ready stand,
With sweet Rosemary in their hand,
A perfect token of your virgin's life:
To wait upon you they intend
Unto the church to make an end,
And God make thee a joyfull wedded wife!"

in which it would seem that the reference to "your virgin's life" indicates that there was a latent notion of the connection of the Rose-*mary* with the Virgin *Mary*, to which mistaken idea I have referred elsewhere. We have already seen that ears of corn were often gilded before being employed for bridal

garlands and adornments, and that in some cases other plants were substituted for Rosemary, and covered over in the same way. It was so also with Bay, which was employed along with Rosemary in early times, as we learn from Herrick, whose name we have already more than once mentioned. He says:—

"This done, we'l draw lots, who shall buy,
And guild the Baies and Rosemary."



BROOM-RAPE (*Orobanche Rapum*).
a, plant; *b*, parasitic growth; *c*, leaflet; *d*, corolla in section; *e*, stamens; *f*, pistil.

In another place he has some *Lines to Rosemary and Baies*, in which he says:—

"My wooing's ended; now my wedding's neere:
When gloves are giving, guilded be thou there."

We read that a lucky father during the sixteenth century once

had the joy of seeing three of his daughters married on the same day, and are told that at the wedding of these three sisters "fine flowers and Rosemary were strewed for them coming home, and so to the father's house, where was a great dinner provided for his said three bride-daughters, with their bride-grooms and company." It would seem that the Rosemary employed at weddings was sometimes dipped in scented water previous to use, instead of being gilded. In Dekker's "Wonderfull Yeare," 1603, the writer relates the story of a bride who died on her wedding day, through the ravages of the plague, and adds: "Here is a strange alteration, for the Rosemary that was washt in sweet water to set out the bridall, is now wet in teares to furnish her buriall." In "The Scornful Lady," a work by Beaumont and Fletcher, the question is asked, "Were the Rosemary branches dipped?" In another chapter we shall have to refer to this custom again. "The garden Rosemary (says Coles in his work entitled "Adam in Eden,") is called *Rosemarinum coronarium*, the rather because women have been accustomed to make crowns (*corona, coronarius*) and garlands thereof"; and another quaint writer remarks of the Bay-tree that, "hee is fit for halls and stately roomes, where, if there be a wedding kept, or suchlike feast, he will be sure to take a place more eminent than the rest. He is a notable smell-feast, and is so good a fellow in them, that almost it is no feast without him. He is a great companion with the Rosemary, who is as good a gossip in all feasts as he a trencher man." Brand says that so late as the year 1698 the old country fashion of decking the bridal bed with sprigs of Rosemary was still kept up, though it is not mentioned as being general. We should not, however, be surprised to learn that it held its ground to a much later date, so tenacious are such old customs of life. We must refer to only one more writer on the use of Rosemary

at wedding ceremonies, and that is the famous old Ben Jonson, who tells us that it was customary for the bridesmaids, on the bridegroom's first appearance in the morning, to present him with a bunch of Rosemary bound with ribands.

There is a popular song made use of in the Isle of Crete, from which we learn that when the bride has been already lavishly bedecked with flowers, she calls for a sprig of Rosemary, which is regarded as an augury of good, and the Nectar flower, which confers long life upon bride and bridegroom. In this case the Rosemary may have been employed, as the Orange Blossom was by the Saracens, and also is in India and among ourselves. This opinion is confirmed by the custom which used to exist in England, and is known to have been continued so late as 1698, of decking the bridal bed with sprigs of this felicitous plant. In the Greek Isles brides wear Hyacinths for their wreaths instead of Orange Blossoms; and it is curious to observe that the same flower was also associated with the dead, just as Rosemary was and still is among ourselves. Crowns of Hyacinths were also worn by the young Greek virgins who assisted at the weddings of their friends.

> "And so we ring a change upon these bells,
> And now of death, and now of love it tells."

These words so strongly remind us of Herrick's lines on the Rosemary—

> "Grow for two ends: it matters not at all
> Be't for my bridall or my buriall,"

that we may be pardoned for inserting them here, although they will be found again in another chapter.

Another writer of about the same period tells us that "Bay-leaves are necessary both for civil uses and for physic; yea, both for the sick and for the sound, both for the living and for the dead. It serveth to adorn the house of God as well as man—to

crowne or encircle, as with a garland, the heads of the living, and to stick and decke forth the bodies of the dead; so that from the cradle to the grave, we have still use of it, we have still need of it." He adds elsewhere, that "Rosemary is almost of as great use as Bays, as well for civil as physical purposes; for civil uses, as all doe know, at weddings, funerals, etc., to bestow among friends." In another work of the same century, which was wonderfully prolific of plays and quaint works, the following scene takes place immediately before a wedding:—

> "*Len.* Pray take a peece of Rosemary.
> *Mir.* I'll wear it, but for the lady's sake, and none of yours."

In the first scene of Fletcher's *Woman's Pride*, as Brand again informs us, "The parties enter with Rosemary as from a wedding." So in *The Pilgrim* we read:—

> "Well, well, since wedding will come after wooing,
> Give me some Rosemary, and lett's be going."

In conclusion we find that in Ben Jonson's quaint work entitled the "Tale of a Tub," one speaker, referring to the intended bridegroom's first arrival, is made to say, "Look, an the wenches ha' not found un out, and do present un with a van of Rosemary, and Bays enough to vill a bow-pott, or trim the head of my best vore-horse; we shall all ha' bride-laces, or points, I see." Elsewhere a rustic lover tells his mistress that at her wedding, "Wee'l have Rosemary and Bayes to vill a bow-pott, and with the same I'le trim that vorehead of my best vore-horse." The brogue is exactly like that which one still hears in parts of Somersetshire and Devon. I trust the reader's patience has not been tried with so much matter about this one plant; but the subject is so extensive, and is still so far from being exhausted, that we shall perhaps be pardoned.

Garlands seem to have been connected with nuptials from a

very remote antiquity. They appear to have been equally used by the Jews and the heathens. Vaughan, in his "Golden Grove," (1608) says: "Among the Romans, when the marriage-day was come, the bride was bound to have a chaplet of flowers or hearbes upon her head," and we learn that among our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, after the benediction had been pronounced in the church, both the bride and the bridegroom were crowned with garlands of flowers, kept in the church for that purpose. It would appear that they were not therefore in every case fresh-gathered. In the Eastern Church, the chaplets used at these times were first consecrated, or blessed, the following being the form of prayer offered:—"Bless, Lord, this ring and crown, that just as the ring encircles the finger of the man, and the crown encircles the brow, so Thy Holy Spirit's grace may surround these who now become husband and wife, that they may have sons and daughters unto the third and fourth generation." These nuptial garlands were sometimes made of myrtle, at other times of flowers, or even ears of corn. That large sums were frequently spent by our ancestors on these chaplets, we learn from the Churchwardens' Accounts of the parish of St. Margaret's, Westminster, where, under date 1540, the following entry is made: "Paid to Alice Lewis, a goldsmith's wife of London, for a serclett to marry maydens in, the 26th day of September, £3 10*s*." This would probably be church property, and so connect more modern customs with those in vogue in Anglo-Saxon times.

Writing of the Greek Church in 1797, Dallaway says: "Marriage is by them called the matrimonial coronation, from the crowns or garlands with which the parties are decorated." In a French work of 1672, on "The Origin of Certain Ancient Customs," we have some interesting remarks on nuptial garlands. "No one questions the propriety of a chaplet of roses for newly-married people" (says the writer), "seeing that flowers in general, and

Roses in particular, are sacred to Venus, to the Graces, and to Love."

We find the Columbine associated, though in a somewhat melancholy way, with the subject under discussion; it, like the willow, was in former times the insignia of a deserted lover, as we learn from the following couplet in Browne's "Britannia's Pastorals":—

> "The Columbine by lonely wand'rer taken,
> Is there ascribed to such as are forsaken;"

or as it is given elsewhere—

> "The Columbine, in tawny often taken,
> Is then ascrib'd to such as are forsaken."

This flower is mentioned by Shakspere in *Hamlet*, and Steevens, in his comment on the passage says, "From the *Caltha Poetarum*, 1599, it should seem as if this flower was the emblem of cuckoldom:—

> "'The blue *cornuted* Columbine,
> Like to the crooked horns of Acheloy.'"

Why this flower should be selected for the emblem is best explained by a reference to the horn-like (or *cornuted*) projection of the nectary, which is so remarkable a feature in the Columbine. The word Acheloy has reference to the Latin and other names by which this flower is known, such as Aquilegia and Akeley. An old name for the Queen of the Meadow, or Meadow Sweet, which abounds in our fields and hedgerows, was Bridewort, it being so called from its resemblance to the white feathers worn by brides; while Dodder, which is sometimes called Lady's Laces, also went by the name of Bride's Laces. Aubrey quotes a very interesting stanza from the eighteenth Idyllium of Theocritus, in which the Hyacinth and Parsley are mentioned as employed by bridesmaids among the Greeks.

"At Sparta's Palace twenty beauteous Mayds
The Pride of Greece, fresh garlands crowned their heads
With Hyacinth and twineing Parsly drest,
Grac't joyful Menelaus Mariage Feast."

A custom used to prevail among the warlike tribes of Northern India, which bore some resemblance to a feature of Greek manners in the heroic times. The Prince or Rajah who had a marriageable daughter invited a number of the neighbouring princes to his court, entertained them with a magnificent banquet, and when they were all seated around the festive board, introduced the princess. She was allowed to gaze upon the guests until she had made her own choice; and when she had done so, to approach her favoured suitor, and throw around his neck the *Varamâlâ*, or Garland of Marriage.[4] M. Barthélemy describes a marriage ceremony in the Island of Delos, in which flowers, shrubs, and trees make a conspicuous figure. He tells us that the inhabitants of the island assembled at daybreak crowned with flowers; that flowers were strewn in the path of the bride and bridegroom; and that the house was garlanded with them. Singers and dancers appeared, crowned with oak, myrtle, and hawthorn blossoms, while the bride and bridegroom were crowned with poppies. Upon their approach to the temple a priest received them at the entrance, and presented to each a branch of ivy, as a symbol of the tie which was to unite them for ever. In Tripoli, on the celebration of a wedding, the presents which are sent are covered with flowers; and although it is well known that the plague is frequently communicated in this way, yet the inhabitants will prefer to run that risk when the disease is abroad, to losing the enjoyment which the use of flowers produces. St. Chrysostom says: "Garlands are wont to be worn on the heads of bridegrooms as a symbol of victory," and we are told that when Alexius was married in the time of the Emperor Theodosius, garlands or wreaths were placed upon his head and

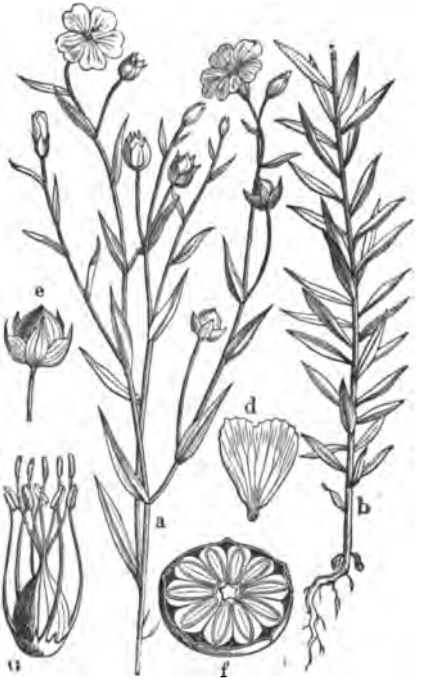
the head of his bride by the chief priest who performed the marriage ceremony. The marriage service of the Eastern Church is literally known as the Ceremony of the Wreath, on account of the solemn rite of the nuptial crown observed in it. To be crowned and to be married are one and the same thing. In fact, as Miss Lambert tells us, the coronation of the bridegroom and bride constitutes a most important part of the marriage ceremony. It is performed by the chief officiating priest with wreaths or chaplets composed for the most part of olive sprays, mixed with white and purple bands or flowers. The priest places these wreaths on the head of each, pronouncing meanwhile the marriage formula; then crosses their hands and invokes the blessing of God that they may be crowned with glory and honour. It must not, however, be forgotten that the term "crowned" designated the dead also, from the custom of placing garlands on the corpse. Up to the ninth century the rite of coronation was forbidden at second nuptials, and only virgins were allowed to marry in their hair, as the phrase went. But we read in the State Papers of England that at the commencement of the seventeenth century, when an important wedding was about to be celebrated under royal patronage, the bride, who had already been once married, was allowed to go with her hair hanging behind her, to indicate that her former marriage had been harmless; while the members of Gray's Inn performed a masquerade before the newly-married pair and their guests, in which they went dressed up to represent the form of Daffodils, Hyacinths, Jonquils, and other flowers.[5]

To this day the Myrtle is retained in Germany and other places as the proper plant for the bridal wreath; and it is most appropriate, seeing that it stands as the emblem of fertility and purity; while it has long been associated with sorrow and war, and in mediæval times was the prize awarded to the chivalrous. The poets related also that the most beautiful and the most persecuted virgin

in Athens was changed into a Myrtle tree. In fact, the plant received its name, according to the old myth, from Myrsine, a favourite of Minerva; and when she was changed into this shrub it was consecrated to Venus.

"The sign of peace who first displays
The Olive wreath possesses;
The lover with the Myrtle sprays
Adorns his crisped tresses,"

sings Drayton in his *Muses' Elysium.* In Prussia it is held to be an evil omen for a bride to plant Myrtle, but three leaves eaten from a bridal wreath are said to cure fever. In some parts of Germany it is customary to give an Almond to bride and bridegroom at the wedding banquet. The Lily was always a favourite flower; the ancient Greeks so regarded it, and in the wedding ceremonies of the modern descendants of that famous race, the priest is said to be supplied with two chaplets of Lilies and Ears of Corn, which he places on the heads of the bride and bridegroom as emblems of purity and abundance. All the wedding party are then crowned with flowers, and as they pass by the houses of their acquaintances, flowers, nuts, and cakes are strewed from the



FLAX (*Linum usitatissimum*).

a, *b*, plant; *c*, stamen with anthers; *d*, petal; *e*, capsule; *f*, the same in section.

windows. We are told that it is customary in one part of Germany for the bride to place Flax in her shoes, that she may never come to want. In another place she will tie a string of Flax around her left leg, in the belief that she will thereby enjoy the full blessing of the marriage state. Besides the flowers and herbs already mentioned as in use at ancient Greek weddings, we find that a sweet-smelling plant, called Sisymbrion, probably a kind of mint or thyme, was employed, along with the Poppy and Sesame. Such plants were either sacred to Venus, the Goddess of Love, or had some relation or allusion to love affairs. The latter plant produced seeds, which, because of their prolific character, were made into cakes by being roasted and pounded with honey, and these were used in the marriage ceremonies.

The Bœotians used garlands of Wild Asparagus, which, though full of prickles, bore excellent fruit. It was therefore thought to resemble the bride, who had given her lover some trouble in gaining her affections, which she was afterwards to recompense. While the house in which the nuptials were celebrated was decorated with garlands, the bride entered it bearing an earthen vessel in which barley was parched; this was intended to signify her obligation to attend to the business of the family. This custom reminds us that among some of the tribes still inhabiting India the bride fetches water for cooking before the wedding ceremonies can be completed, as a proof that she consents to undertake the duties of domestic cook. As the Hindûs still use grain, so the ancient Greeks were wont to pour Figs and other sorts of fruit upon the heads of bride and bridegroom when the latter entered the house of the bride to bear her away as his wife. At the time when the festivities were proceeding several significant ceremonies were performed. One at Athens was as follows:—A boy, half covered with branches of hawthorn and oak, appeared with a basket of bread, and sung a hymn commencing, "I have left the

worse, and found the better state." It is said that this hymn used also to be sung at one of the Athenian festivals, when they celebrated the event of their change of diet from acorns to corn—a change which, while it only involves the dropping of the first and last letter of the word, meant a great advance upon the former, and "worse state." But surely the people then did not believe in "single *blessedness*"; for the reference in the hymn leads us to infer that that state is to be compared with acorn-living, while the marriage state is that in which the pure wheat is enjoyed! Other ceremonies were observed which have a bearing on our subject, such as the custom of strewing the bed with flowers, and that which required the newly-married couple to eat a Quince, to remind them that their conversation was to be pleasant and agreeable to each other. Among the Romans the bridegroom scattered Nuts among the boys, by which he intimated that he had now done with boyish amusements, and must henceforth be the man.

I might have added here a long list of flowers and plants which are still connected in various places more or less directly with marriage affairs,—as, for example, those which are supposed to indicate to the young lovers whom they shall marry. Of some of these magic plants and the customs and superstitions connected with them, I have treated in other chapters; I will, therefore, only refer to one or two here, that the subject may not be entirely omitted from so suitable a place. It is an old superstition, as Mr. Jones writes in his instructive work on "Finger Ring Lore," that the bending of the leaves to the right or to the left of the Orpine plant would never fail to tell whether a lover were true or false. In an old poem entitled the *Cottage Girl*, written about a hundred years ago (on Midsummer Eve, 1786), this plant and the rustic custom are thus alluded to:—

> "Oft on *the shrub* she casts her eye,
> That spoke her true-love's secret sigh;

Or else, alas ! too plainly told
Her true-love's faithless heart was cold."

The Orpine (*Sedum Telephium*), also called Livelong, gained its name of Midsummer Men from the once common custom of gathering it on Midsummer Eve—

"This eve, though direst of the year,"

most famous in magic and divination. We are told of one Sally Evans that "She would never go to bed on Midsummer Eve without sticking up in her room the well-known plant called Midsummer Men, as the bending of the leaves would never fail to tell her whether her lover was true or false." In 1801 a gentleman exhibited a small gold ring, which had been found in Yorkshire, and which had for a device two Orpine plants joined by a true-love knot, the stalks of the plants being bent to each other, in token that the persons represented by them were to come together in marriage. In Scotland, to find out whether the lover would remain true and become the husband, it was customary, says the Rev. W. Gregor, to take three stalks of the *Carldoddie*, or Ribwort (*Plantago lanceolata*), when in bloom. These were stripped of their blossom, laid in the left shoe, and then placed under the pillow. If the lover were to become the husband, the three stalks were again in full bloom by morning. If, on the contrary, he were to prove untrue, the stalks would remain blossomless.[6]

In the notes which I have made to this chapter will be found a number of works which may be consulted. This subject has been more largely treated than many others, so that there is not the same need for dwelling on it more fully here. Any one who may be anxious to ascertain whose hand she shall gain, may do so by the use of Hempseed, Yarrow, Apple-peeling, or a hundred other simple means; and I shall be glad to impart

private information on the subject to such as may be curious enough to consult me on the matter! Meanwhile I may be allowed to express the hope that my fair readers will not be too hasty in throwing the Varamâlâ around their lover's neck, but that when they have done so, and the Rosemary and Bay, Orange Blossom and Myrtle have been called into use, they may always retain pleasant memories of their Bridal Wreaths and Bouquets.

SAGE (*Salvia officinalis*).

a, plant; *b*, blossom; *c*, corolla, open.

CHAPTER V.

FLOWERS AND GARLANDS FOR HEROES, SAINTS, AND GODS.

THE custom of crowning the statues of the saints with wreaths of flowers was common in France in the thirteenth century. I shall not, however, here treat merely of wreaths and garlands, but even of single flowers dedicated to the saints, heroes, and gods of early and later times, and of bouquets or other floral decoration with which they may have been honoured and adorned. In Picardy, for example, we find

St. Barbara bedecked not only with a crown of flowers on her head, but also with a nosegay in her right hand. There lies before me a little work entitled "Flowers and Festivals," which devotes a chapter to the Flowers and Plants dedicated to Saints. It opens in the following manner:—

> "'A lesson in each flower,
> A story in each tree and bower.
> In every herb on which we tread
> Are written words, which, rightly read,
> Will lead us from earth's fragrant sod
> To hope, and holiness to God.'

"In ancient calendars nearly every day in the year was dedicated to some saint, who had his own legend and emblem. Many saints were known by some peculiarity, either connected with, or which was supposed more or less to influence every-day life. Flowers have, from the earliest times, been connected with the great festivals of the Church, or with the saints of the calendar. It is to be observed that the flowers dedicated to, or connected with the names of certain saints, are generally in blossom at or near the time of their festivals. Whether this was originally arranged, more especially to enforce the teaching of the Church and of its doctrine, by the lives of its holy men, thus intimately associating natural objects with spiritual matters; or whether, from the fact of the flowers being in bloom at the times of the various festivals, and being thus connected in the minds of the simple, independently of any direct teaching from the church, is not now to be ascertained, but, be this as it may, whether they were originally objects of superstition, or whether our forefathers 'loved to discover in each opening bud some holy symbol of their blessed Lord, or of His saints,' still it is to be hoped that the subject is not without interest for us, their posterity, in these more practical days." Perhaps it may be well for

us to follow the order of the seasons, as we have done in the eighth chapter; and in this way we shall be able to get a better idea of the flowers which may be in blossom at any particular season, than we should do by taking up the names of the saints in alphabetical order or indiscriminately. It will be noticed that in speaking of the flowers dedicated to the saints, some are merely arbitrary dedications, others bear the names of the saints even in the language of the folk. It will also help us to some extent to judge which of the saints were well known, and in favour with the people; for while the name of St. Lucian is hardly known, and no flower is dedicated to this, the first-named Romish saint in the calendar, St. John has won for himself such notoriety, that the list of flowers bearing his name really deserves a separate chapter for itself alone. To St. Lucian (January 8th) the common Laurel has been set apart; five days after, the Romish Church kept the feast of St. Hilary (January 13th), and dedicated to him the Barren Strawberry. This saint's name is now known to us chiefly through its association with the first law-term in the year. St. Prisca, whose name comes next (January 18th), and St. Fabian (January 20th), are too little known to deserve attention, and as we have now had enough names before us to see how the calendar is crowded we shall pass by in future such as do not merit some special notice in connection with flower lore. To St. Agnes the Christmas Rose, with its delicate white blossoms, has been dedicated—and most appropriately, since she was always regarded as a special patroness of purity. Since the Reformation she has gradually lost her importance in this country, though our rural virgins in the north in the beginning of the present century still practised some singular rites when they kept the fast of St. Agnes, in order that they might discover their future husbands. Although this divination was probably, in certain cases, performed by means

of some kind of flower or plant, I have not found any proof of this. Dreams were much relied on, and pins were employed in a curious manner for gaining the desired information. We must observe, however, that the name Agnes is associated with the Latin word for a lamb, *agnus*; and on the fast held at this season two of the purest and whitest lambs used to be presented at her altar. Now we find many plants associated with Agnus, if not with Agnes, one of which is thus addressed by Darwin—

> "Cradled in snow, and fanned by Arctic air,
> Shines, gentle Barometz! thy golden hair;
> Rooted in earth, each cloven hoof descends,
> And round and round her flexile neck she bends;
> Crops the gray coral-moss, and hoary thyme,
> Or laps with rosy tongue the melting rime,
> Eyes with mute tenderness her distant dam,
> Or seems to bleat, a Vegetable Lamb."

The Hellebore used to be called the Flower of St. Agnes in some places.

In another chapter I have dwelt somewhat fully upon the flowers dedicated to the Virgin; it will, therefore, only be necessary to note here in passing, in order to make our list complete, that on February 2nd the Feast of the Purification is observed, when the Snowdrop is dedicated to Mary. This festival was also called Candlemas Day, and it was believed that if the Christmas decorations were not now taken down, there would certainly appear as many goblins as there were leaves still remaining.

> "Down with the Rosemary and so
> Down with the Baies and Misletoe:
> Down with the Holly, Ivie, all
> Wherewith ye dress the Christmas Hall:
> That so the superstitious find
> No one least branch there left behind:
> For look how many leaves there be

Neglected there (maids, trust to me),
So many goblins you shall see."

To St. Valentine the Yellow Crocus has been dedicated, and we all know how the name of Valentine has come to be associated with love affairs. Old Herrick, speaking of a bride, says:—

"Then grieve her not, with saying
She must no more a-maying:
Or by Rosebuds divine
Who'll be her Valentine!"

But I may perhaps here correct the popular error which makes St. Valentine the patron of lovers, although he has now for many a long year been so regarded.[1] The connection of the saint with the customs associated with his day is "purely accidental. They did not in any way originate with the saint; possibly they are far older; certainly in their rise they are quite independent of him. For certain reasons they prevailed in February; and, as it happened, the saint's day also fell in February. And it was in this way that the saint's name and such alien customs were brought into contact; and so St. Valentine became the Saint of Lovers."

On the 1st of March falls St. David's Day; he is the patron saint of the Welsh, and to him the Leek, the Welsh emblem, is dedicated.

"March, various, fierce, and wild with wind-crackt cheeks,
By wilder Welshmen led, and crown'd with Leeks."

In the North of England they had an old proverbial saying bearing reference to this day and the duty of the husbandman:—

"Upon St. David's Day
Put oats and barley in the clay."

Having spoken of the Welsh Saint, we must not omit the worthy Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. On his day (March 17th) the Irish adorn themselves with Shamrock. This is the

"Chosen leaf of bard and chief,
Old Erin's native Shamrock."

But what the original Shamrock was it is difficult to say. The Christian Irish, says an old writer, held the Seamroy sacred, because of the three leaves united in one stalk, and dedicated it to St. Patrick because he taught them to understand the mysterious doctrine of the Trinity by means of the trifoliate leaf. St. Benedict whose anniversary falls on March 21st, is about the first saint to receive the honour of a flower specially bearing his name, and as we proceed, we shall find the saints who now begin to be thus distinguished continually increasing in number. The Avens (*Geum urbanum*), also called Wild Rye and Way Bennett, is very commonly known as Herb Bennett. The Latin name, which has been explained elsewhere, was *Herba Benedicta*, or Blessed Herb. The Hemlock is also known as Herb Bennett, perhaps because it used to be believed that serpents would flee from its leaves; and a third plant bearing the name is the well-known Valerian, which in Spanish is called *Yerba benedicta.* In point of fact, the proper name of these plants, as Dr. Prior says, was St. Benedict's Herb, as the German name (*Sanct Benedicten-kraut*) shows; and was assigned to such as were supposed to be antidotes, in allusion to a legend respecting the saint. It is said that on one occasion a monk presented him with a cup of poisoned wine for the purpose of putting an end to St. Benedict's life; but when the saint blessed it the glass was shivered to pieces, and the crime of the monk exposed.

On the 25th of March, or Lady-day, is celebrated the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, and to her is dedicated the Marigold. As I have already shown, a great many flowers were in former times dedicated to Mary; but while the Marigold is arbitrarily set apart to her on Lady-day by the Church, it is not so certain that the name of the flower has any connection with, or reference to,

the name of the Virgin. It has been observed that "the Marigold is said to have been named from the fact of its being in bloom on all festivals held in honour of the Virgin"; but those who said so were somewhat hasty, and have withdrawn their statement. The name is doubtless older than the introduction of the Virgin's festivals among us, although the name of Mary doubtless had a great deal to do with the corruption which is noticeable in the history of the name of the Mary-gold, or Marigold.

In former times blue was worn on St. George's Day (April 23rd), whence it happened that the Harebell, being in blossom, was dedicated to that saint.

> "On St. George's Day, when blue is worn,
> The blue Harebells the fields adorn."

On this occasion the churches used to be decorated with flowers, as we learn from the Churchwardens' Account in the "History of Reading." One entry contains "Charges of Saynt George. Payd for roses, bells, gyrdle, sword, and dager, iij^{s}. iiij^{d}. Payd for settying on the bells and roses, iiij^{d}."

Our English calendars do not generally mention St. Robert, whose day is usually fixed at April 29th. We must not, however, overlook him, because one of our commonest wild flowers is said by some to derive its name from this saint. The little Wild Geranium, generally known as Bird's Eye, or by some such name, is variously called Herb Robert, Sancti Ruperti Herba, Herba Roberti, or Ruprechts-kraut, all with the same meaning. But I find not fewer than half-a-dozen theories to account for the name. According to one writer, Robert is from "Ruberta, a rubro colore, an herbe of a red colour"; and so the name denotes nothing more than the colour of the flowers. Another says that the flower derives its name (*Geranium Robertianum*) from a celebrated curator and naturalist once connected with the Oxford Botanic garden.

The next theory is that the herb was employed to cure a disease known in Germany as Robert's Plague. Nay, says another, but it is surely so called because St. Robert cured the disease with this plant, and so gave his name to both the flower and the plague. Others make the name to be a corruption of Robin, in memory and honour of the bold Robin Hood, and with this idea I partly agree, since the flower is actually called Poor Robin, and Robin Hood, in the West of England; but I think that St. Robert must not be altogether dethroned, especially after the testimony adduced from Germany. I am supported in my views by an able writer whose words I have more than once quoted. Mr. King says: "Another species of Geranium—the Crane's-bill (*G. Robertiana, sic*)—is connected, if not with the more powerful gods of Valhalla, at least with the elves and wood-spirits, who were their contemporaries. In some parts of England it is known as 'Herb Robert'; in France as 'Robin des bois'; and in Germany as 'Ruprechts-kraut.' Ruprecht is the 'Knecht Ruprecht' of German household stories; the same to all appearance as our Robin Goodfellow, with whose name his own is, in fact, identical;

WILD GERANIUM (*Geranium pratense*).
a, spray of blossom; *b*, seed pods; *c*, seed.

and the flower that loves to fix itself on old walls, on ruins, and on the roofs of solitary farmhouses, is thus the property of the half-kindly, half-mischievous sprite, who, like itself, haunted hearth and 'byre,' as a household goblin."[2]

Some dedicate the Midsummer or Ox-eye Daisy to St. Barnabas; but there is another plant (*Centaurea solstitialis*) which actually bears the name of St. Barnaby's Thistle, from the fact that it comes into flower at the time of the summer solstice. This saint claimed June 11th, according to the old style, as his day, the 22nd being now dedicated to him. The fields and hedgerows are by this time filled with flowers, making the earth look gay and gladsome. Three hundred years ago Peele wrote the following lines in reference to this fact:—

> "Not Iris, in her pride and beautie,
> Adorns her arch with such varietie;
> Nor doth the milk-white way, in frostie night,
> Appear so faire and beautiful in sight,
> As doe these fields and groves, and sweeter bowers,
> Bestrew'd and deckt with parti-color'd floures."

In the Churchwardens' Accounts of St. Mary-at-Hill, London, the following entry occurs: "For Rose garlondis and Woodrove garlondis on St. Barnebe's Daye, xj^{d}." Under date 1486 again: "Item, for two doss' di boese (2 doz. box) garlands for prestes and clerkes on Saynt Barnabe daye, j^{s}. x^{d}." In the year 1512 also we find among the church disbursements: "For Rose-garlands and Lavender, St. Barnabas,' j^{s}. vj^{d}." Gerarde, in his "Historie of Plants," tells us that "Woodrooffe hath many square stalkes full of joints, and at every knot or joint seaven or eight long narrow leaves, set round about like a starre or the rowell of a spurre; the floures grow at the top of the stemmes, of a white colour, and of a very sweete smell, as is the rest of the herbe, which being made up into garlands or bundles, and hanged up in houses in the heate of

sommer, doth very well attemper the aire, coole, and make fresh the place, to the delight and comfort of such as are therein."

It is in this month (June 24th) that we celebrate the nativity of St. John the Baptist, and find his name associated with so many flowers. And here we shall have to spend some time in careful study, for St. John is as intimately mixed up with heathenism as we found the Virgin to be; he has, in fact, taken a very similar position in relation to the old heathen gods as Mary took in relation to the goddesses. "The Virgin, as we have seen, succeeded Freyja in the 'calendar' of Northern flowers. The two 'white' gods of Valhalla,—Baldur and Heimdal,—both of whom represent the sun, and whose peculiar epithet referred to the dazzling brightness of sunlight, were replaced in a similar manner by St. John the Baptist, whose midsummer festival is marked all over Europe by so many remains of solar worship. He is himself called 'White Saint John' in some old German and Gallic calendars. Flowers with large sun-shaped discs, either white or golden-yellow, were dedicated to Baldur, as the sun-god; and it was in this manner that the *Hypericum* became the peculiar property of St. John, and, as the '*fuga dæmonum*,' was so powerful in repelling the works of darkness. One species of St. John's Wort has its leaves pierced with minute holes, which are said to have been made by the devil with a needle. The root, too, is marked with red spots, still called 'Baldur's Blood' in some parts of Norway, but generally said to be the 'Blood of St. John,' and to appear always on the day of his beheading. The old Northern name of the Horse-daisy was 'Baldur's Brow'; and this, with many other species of Chrysanthemums, all with white or golden flowers, became also dedicated to St. John." Without venturing to contradict the learned writer of the words just quoted I must here add that the name of Baldur's Brow is generally assigned to quite another plant, as

the notes will show. Grimm quotes an old writer who tells us of Baldur "he is so fair of countenance and bright that he shines of himself; there is a grass so white that it is evened with Baldur's brow;[8] it is of all grasses whitest, and thereby mayest thou mark his fairness both of hair and body." St. John appropriated the flowers of light and sunshine. "The attributes of the Baptist, however, are sometimes shared in a remarkable manner by St. John the Evangelist; and the golden 'sunflowers,' as the chrysanthemums were formerly called, are occasionally introduced in representations of the latter saint with singular beauty and fitness: thus, in stained glass of the twelfth century, filling a window in the apse of the church of St. Remi at Rheims, the Virgin and St. John appear on either side of the cross, the head of both encircled by aureoles, having sunflowers inserted in their outer circles. The flowers are turned towards the Saviour on the cross, as towards their true sun."

Referring to this subject Archdeacon Hare remarks that one "source from which many popular names of flowers were derived was the hagiology of the Catholic (*i.e.*, Romish) Church." A favourite flower in the Middle Ages was usually consecrated to, and often called after, a favourite saint, especially when it had any medical virtues—the choice of the saint being usually directed by the season when the flower blossomed. Most of these names were probably assigned by monks, who were our first gardeners and were skilled in the properties of simples, and this will account for their general diffusion; for some of these names spread over a great part of Christian Europe, while others were restricted to particular nations, or even districts. Thus *Erba S. Giovanni* is a name given in Italy to several plants that are in flower at the festival of St. John the Baptist; and early figs as *Fichi S. Giovanni.* With us, and in Germany,

Hypericum is by way of eminence St. John's Wort and Johanniskraut. The wide-spread belief in its medical efficacy is shown by an extract from "Every Man in his Humour": "On the Vigill of St. John Baptist" (says Stowe) "every man's door is shadowed with greene birch, long fennel, St. John's Wort, Orpin, White Lilies, and suchlike." The same plant was used by maidens in divinations, and was regarded in Germany as a potent charm against evil spirits. The *Ascyrum*, or Hard-hay, a plant something like the former, and blowing at the same time, but with larger leaves, is called Square St. John's Grass or Peter's Wort, the festivals of the two saints being within five days of each other.

Respecting St. John's Wort much has been written. Coming into blossom about St. John's Day, and having flowers which reminded of the sun with its darkness and evil-dispersing rays, it was regarded as specially powerful to avert ill. It was gathered on St. John's Eve to be hung up in houses as a preservative against thunder and evil spirits; it was burnt in the midsummer fires for magical purposes; the Scotch used to carry it about on their persons to guard against the power of witchcraft; and various healing and curative properties were attributed to the different species of this plant. One kind has gained the name of Tutsan, or Titsum as it is called in Devonshire—a word which comes from the French *Toute saine*, or Heal-all. In Brazil the *Hypericum* is said to be an antidote to the bite of poisonous serpents; in Russia it is used as a defence against hydrophobia; while in England it was employed internally against mania. Similar notions attach to other plants if used on St. John's Eve or Day. Thus we find in East Prussia the belief that if the sap of Dog-wood be absorbed in a handkerchief on St. John's Night, it will secure the fulfilment of all your wishes. If the Meadow-sweet, or Queen of the Meadow, be taken on

St. John's Day, it will reveal a thief, says the Icelander, who calls the plant Mjadurt, or Mead-wort; if the thief be a woman the plant will float, if a man it will sink. It is on St. John's Eve that the magic Fern-seed may be obtained, and with this one may become invisible. "St. John represents among the Christian saints the Light *par excellence;* his festival falls at the time of the summer solstice, or on the 24th of June, the last of the three days which mark the culmination of the sun's ascension in the heavens. On this day the sun may be said not to set, the night is so short, if night there be; for the whole heavens are in some places luminous and bright. The St. John's Fires which are lighted here symbolize the celestial fire, the sun. The birth of the forerunner John preceded by six months that of the Saviour Christ. He who went before announced the coming of the One who was to follow. John prepared the way of the Lord. John instituted the water of baptism as the sign of repentance; and, according to a popular tradition found in Tuscany, the dew which falls on various plants before the sun rises on the morning of St. John's Day is capable of preserving the eyes from all diseases during the rest of the year. In Sicily it is usual to gather the St. John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) and dip it in oil, so transforming it into a 'balm for every wound.' . . . It is said to be dangerous to gather herbs on St. John's Day after the sun has risen. In Altmark they say that if you should pluck a plant at such a time you will suffer from cancer."

Besides the Fern and *Hypericum*, the *Artemisia* is a plant famous for its connection with St. John. In Sicily there are two flowers, one red, the other blue, which are distinguished by the name of St. John's Beard. Fuchs, who gave his name to the Fuchsia, says that in his time the people of Germany made hats and girdles of *Artemisia*, which they called St. John's Girdle, and

threw them into the fires which on St. John's Day were lighted in the principal thoroughfares.

Next to St. John comes Peter (June 29th), to whom the Church has dedicated the Yellow Rattle. "The yellow floure, called the Yellow Cockscombe, which floureth now in the fields, is a sign of St. Peter's Day; whereon it is always in fine floure, in order to admonish us of the denial of our Lord by St. Peter; that even he, the prince of the apostles, did fall through feare, and denyed his Lord; so are we, fallible creatures, the more liable to a similar tentatioun." There are several plants which bear the name of this saint. There is the Square St. John's Wort, which is also called, from its being in blossom at the time of St. Peter's festival, St. Peter's Wort, a name which we find in Italy and Germany, as well as among ourselves. Nay, even the French call it Herbe Saint Pierre, but for a reason which I cannot here stay to explain. The Cowslip used to be called St. Peter's Wort in the old herbals, on account of the cluster of blossoms bearing some resemblance to a bunch of keys, the badge of the Apostle. In Germany the plant still bears the name of Lady's-key or Key-bloom.[4] Wall-barley, or St. Peter's Corn, in Germany also known as Peter's Corn, is said to ripen about the same time, but in this instance, as in one already quoted and more fully explained in the notes, the name of the Apostle may have been substituted for the word from which it was derived. It is well known that the Apostle's name is connected with words meaning a stone, and Peter's Corn may have meant first of all the corn which grows among stones, then Stone, or Wall-barley would, in the languages of the Continent, easily get changed to Peter's-barley or Peter's-corn.

The White Lily, as already noticed in a former chapter, is dedicated to the Virgin, whose Visitation falls on July 2nd. "The Lily is first directly connected with the Virgin in the story of her

Assumption,—a story which was not generally accepted until the beginning of the fifth century, although it dates apparently from the second. This asserts that when the apostles, on the third day after her interment, visited the grave in which they had laid the Mother of the Lord, they found it open, and filled with a growth of Roses and White Lilies. Henceforth these flowers became her especial emblems, in accordance with the text, 'I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valley.' The flower which generally appears in connection with the Virgin is the Great White Lily (*Lilium candidum*) of our gardens, the purest and most beautiful of all the species. Singularly enough, the native country of this Lily is still a matter of dispute. It is nowhere found wild in Palestine, and it has even been suggested that it may have been an importation from the New World. This, however, as Dr. Lindley some time since pointed out, is certainly not the case, since the true White Lily appears in many Italian and Flemish pictures of earlier date than the first voyages of Columbus (so that it must have been known on the Continent before the New World had been discovered). It is now cultivated in both Syria and Egypt as an exotic bulb; but it seems probable that it has been known in those countries from a very early period, and that the beauty and purity of its flowers caused it to be regarded with a peculiar reverence long before the Christian era. It seems to be this Lily which was believed by the Jews to counteract all witchcraft and enchantments, for which reason Judith is said to have crowned herself with a wreath of Lilies (as shown in another chapter) when she set out for the tent of Holofernes. It was perhaps introduced into Europe during the Roman period, for it can hardly be any other than the Great White Lily to which Bede refers as a fit emblem of the resurrection of the Virgin; the pure white petals signifying her spotless body; the golden anthers within typifying her soul, sparkling with Divine light.

In pictures of the Annunciation, the branch of White Lilies is not placed in the hand of the archangel Gabriel until a later period of Italian art. The earlier painters represent him with either a sceptre, or, more rarely, with a spray of the Olive tree. But in almost every case the vase of Lilies is placed by the side of the Virgin, with its three mystical flowers crowning their three green stems." In a former chapter I gave a brief account of the legends connected with the Lily, and to it, as well as to the notes, I must here refer the reader for such other facts as are found connecting the Virgin with flower lore. One or two names may perhaps here be added, which have not found a place elsewhere. I have already noted that Canterbury Bells are called Lady's Gloves or *Gants de Nôtre Dame.* The French give the name of Virgin's Spray to one plant (*Ornithgalum pyramidale*), while in Italy another plant, not mentioned before, is called the Madonna's Plant (*Erba della Madonna*, perhaps *Crassula major*). The Arabs are said to call the Rose of Jericho St. Mary's Flower, and the Welsh have a fern known as Rhedyn Mair, or Mary's Fern.

Following St. Swithin, to whom the Small Cape Marigold (*Calendula pluvialis*) has been dedicated, comes St. Margaret, to whom the Virginian Dragon's Head is devoted. Her day is July 20th, and she is followed by St. Mary Magdalen. To her a number of flowers have been dedicated, amongst which we notice the Costmary, Maghet, Maudlin, and Maudlin-wort; but for the explanation of these we will refer our readers to Dr. Prior, who supplies some interesting information respecting the flowers themselves, and the saint after whom they were named.

On July 25th we have the name of St. James brought before us, and here we meet with a plant called St. James' Wort, which on the Continent bears exactly the same name. It blossoms about this season of the year; and as James was the patron of horses, the plant was employed by veterinary surgeons in their

treatment of colts and the diseases of horses. Besides this plant (*Senecio Jacobæa*), another known as St. James' Cress was devoted to this saint. St. James' Night is regarded as unlucky, consequently on this occasion, say the people of East Prussia, one must avoid climbing a cherry tree, as the danger of breaking the neck will be great. To St. Anne the Chamomile is dedicated. This person was said to be the mother of the Virgin, and has been worshipped in the Romish Church from a very early period. The botanical name of the Common or Dog's Chamomile is Matricaria, and the flower seems to have been dedicated to St. Anne from a fanciful derivation of this word from *mater* and *cara*, or "Beloved mother."

In September we do honour to St Michael, and have a flower named Michaelmas Daisy. On this day (September 29th, or October 11th, old style) people often abstain from gathering Blackberries. At this season, so Brand informs us, village maidens in the West of England go up and down the hedges gathering crab-apples (in Somersetshire they are often called Grabs). These are carried home and put into a loft, being so arranged as to form the initials of the names of their supposed lovers. The initials which are found to be perfect on *old* Michaelmas day are supposed to represent the strongest attachments, and the best for the choice of husbands.

October 18th is St. Luke's Day, and was regarded as lucky for lovers. "Let me see, this is St. Luke's day, which I have found by long experience to be fitter for this purpose than St. Agnes's, and the ingredients more excellent. Take Marigold flowers, a sprig of Marjoram, Thyme, and a little Wormwood; dry them before a fire, rub them to powder, then sift it through a fine piece of lawn; simmer these with a small quantity of virgin honey in white vinegar over a slow fire; with this anoint your stomach, breasts, and lips lying down, and repeat these words thrice:—

"'St. Luke, St. Luke, be kind to me,
In dreams let me my true love see!'

"This said, hasten to sleep; and in the soft slumber of your night's repose the very man whom you shall marry will appear before you." Such is a specimen of the folly indulged in by our ancestors in the good old times.

On November 25th St. Catherine is brought into prominence. But, as Archdeacon Hare says, "There are so many St. Catherines, that it is difficult to determine in honour of which the Nigella (Love-in-a-mist or Devil-in-a-bush) was called St. Catherine's Flower, whether St. Catherine of Sienna, whose festival was the 30th of April, or St. Catherine of Genoa, to whom the 14th of September was consecrated. The seed of the Nigella is sown about the former season; it blows about the latter. Or did the fancy detect some dim likeness between the shape of the flower and that of St. Catherine's Wheel? (Dr. Prior answers 'Yes!') In that case it would be after St. Catherine the Martyr, who was commemorated on the 25th of November, and who certainly was much more generally known than her namesakes; not only was her emblem used as the sign of an inn, but from 'Northward Ho!' (iii. 1), it appears that Catherine-wheel farthingales (a kind of crinolines) were then the fashion. . . . It was probably in honour of the same St. Catherine that the Catherine-pear was so called; just as the Martin-pear is that which ripens about Martinmas. The beautiful colour of the former seems at one time to have been proverbial among us." Suckling, when describing the bride in his *Ballad upon a Wedding* says:—

"Her cheeks so faire a white was on,
No daisy makes comparison;
Who sees them is undone:
For streaks of red were mingled there
Such as are on a Catherine-pear
The side that's next the sun.'

Gay again in his "Pastorals," which are full of vivid rustic reality, and in which he gives vent to his love for rural imagery on his escape from his apprenticeship at the silk-mercer's, makes Sparabella boast, when comparing herself with her rival—

> "Her wan complexion's like the withered leek,
> While Catherine-pears adorn my ruddy cheek."

In "Westward Ho!" we meet with the odd epithet "Catherine-pear-coloured beards." There were also St. Catherine's peaches and plums.

St. Barbara's day falls on the 4th of December, and after her we find Winter-Cress called Herb St. Barbara or St. Barbara's Cress, names which exist also, and perhaps chiefly, in Germany. There are still a number of other saints whose names are more obscure than those already quoted, but who must at some time or other have been tolerably popular either in Great Britain or on the Continent, judging from the fact that they have left the impress of their names upon several flowers and plants. The Pig-nut is often called St. Anthony's Nut, because that saint was the patron of pigs, and for a similar reason the Ranunculus, whose tubers are a favourite food for those creatures, was called St. Anthony's Turnip, or Rape. Another plant (Strychnos) is dedicated to St. Ignatius, and called St. Ignatius' Bean. An Irish saint, whose name we seldom hear, is connected with a plant under the name of St. Dabore's Heath, and St. Patrick's Cabbage is a name for London Pride, from its being found in the West of Ireland, where St. Patrick lived. St. Marguerite, or Margaret, has left her name on the Daisy; but for the story of

> "Maid Margarete, that was so meeke and mild,"

and other facts relating to her flower lore, I must refer to the works quoted in the notes. The Black Hellebore, which flowers

about Christmas, and is, in consequence, devoted to St. Agnes, bears also the name of Christwurz in Germany, of Christmas Rose in England.

St. William lays claim to the 25th of June, and Archdeacon Hare says the Sweet William was dedicated to him, the adjective Sweet being probably a substitution for Saint. This, however, is more than doubtful. We have many other flowers called Sweet, from their fragrance, as Sweet Alice, and Sweet John, besides Sweet-pea, Sweet-gale, Sweet-bay, Sweet-briar, and several others. Alice does not derive her sweet name from being a saint, nor does Sweet John, although the Archdeacon adds to his note on Sweet William that "a like substitution seems to have taken place in Sweet John, which blows about the 6th of May, the festival of St. John Port Latin, and of St. John of Damascus." Bishop's Weed, which flowers towards the end of June, was known by the name of Herb William. It seems probable that the name of Sweet William does not originally apply to any saint at all. The French name is *Œillet*, and though I can find no proof of it, it is almost certain that *Œillet* became corrupted into *Willy*, and then was connected with the name of a man or saint, and changed to William. One writer remarks that Dr. Turner did not refer to the plant, at least under this name, in his work written in 1568, but in thirty years from that time it is mentioned by Gerarde as a common plant in the well-cultivated gardens of the age. He calls the flowers Sweet Williams, "but on what account they were so named we are left to surmise, unless we could persuade ourselves that they were so called after the greatest man of that age, William Shakspere." But Shakspere, strange to say, does not name the flower, and it would need a rather bold stretch of the imagination to lead to the supposition that Shakspere's celebrity had led to the use of the name. So

we take the theory which derives William through Willy, from Œillet as the most probable yet brought forward. Mr. King's remarks are so much to the point, that I cannot forbear quoting them here:—"Many other flowers received the names of saints for less definite reasons (than those of sacred or magical attributes being possessed by them), but partly, perhaps, because they blossomed about the time of the saint's festival, and partly because they were found in plenty about the place which contained his shrine. Although the 'Canterbury Bells,' which abound in the Kentish woods, have only an indirect connection with St. Thomas,—having been so called from the small horse-bells of the pilgrims, which they resembled in shape,—the small Red Pink (*Dianthus prolifer*), found wild in the neighbourhood of Rochester, is perhaps the original 'Sweet Saint William,' for the word 'Saint' has only been dropt since days which saw the demolition of St. William's shrine in the cathedral. This, however, is but a conjecture, and we must be content to remain uncertain whether the masses of bright flowers, which form one of the chief glories of old-fashioned gardens commemorate St. William of Rochester, St. William of York, or—likeliest, perhaps, of the three—St. William of Acquitaine, the half-soldier, half-monk, whose fame was so widely spread throughout the south of Europe."[5]

On July 25th was kept the festival of St. Christopher, as well as that of St. James, and to that saint has been dedicated our most Royal Fern. Dr. Prior tells us that Herb Christopher is a name vaguely applied to many plants, which have no qualities in common. Some names, applied to such plants as grow in the water as the Osmunda fern does, might refer to the saint's wading the river; whilst others, such as the Everlasting (*Gnaphalium*), which is very prolific, might point to the legend of his bearing children on his shoulders. The

plants called St. Christopher's Herb are numerous, including, beside the Royal Fern and Everlasting, the Fleabane, Meadow-sweet, Vetch, and others. Some think the name was primarily applied to the Osmunda, or some other plant, which reached perfection about St. Christopher's Day. "When that name is given to the *Water Fern*, it seems to be with reference to the legend of St. Christopher, who is usually represented as wading through a river, bearing the infant Christ on his shoulders; a legend which itself seems to have arisen out of the name *Christophoros*, or Christ-bearer, assumed by the saint in a spiritual sense, as Ignatius called himself *Theophoros*, or God-bearer, to express his carrying the Deity in his heart." The Osmunda has long been associated with the saints and gods, and it is perhaps possible for us to trace the transference of the fern from the heathen gods of the Norse mythology to the saint of the Romish Church. In the Tyrol it is called the "Blooming Fern"; and is placed over the door for good luck. This is the fern which some regard as bearing the lucky seed already referred to, although the Polypody is more generally supposed to have the power of conferring wealth and rendering invisible. "One species of Osmunda (*crispa*) is in Norway called 'St. Olaf's Beard.' It is elsewhere known as 'Thor's Root'; an additional reason, perhaps, for regarding its far more beautiful cousin, our own Royal Fern (*Osmunda regalis*), the 'Herb Christopher' of Gerarde, as having been anciently connected with the Northern god. No one who has seen this stateliest of ferns in its own most favoured haunts—some sheltered Cornish valley, the banks of a rushing Dartmoor stream, or the wooded margin of Grasmere or Killarney—

> "'Like Naiad by the side
> Of Grecian brook, or Lady of the Mere,
> Sole sitting on the shores of old romance,'—

"will doubt that its size and remarkable appearance—especially in autumn, when its deep-green fronds take all the varied crimsons of the Sycamore—must have always claimed attention. 'Osmund the Waterman' is one of its old English names; and the white centre of its root is the 'Heart of Osmund.' Osmund —the word means 'God's protection'—is said, but apparently without direct authority, to have been a name of Thor; and some legend connected with that god's many fights and wanderings may have been once attached to the Royal Fern. Perhaps, after all, the half-mystery that clings about the plant renders it more attractive to the imagination, than if we had its legend at full length; and whether the Christian giant has or has not in this instance succeeded the Northern god,—as he certainly has in many others,—his story is never more appropriately recalled to us than where the river bank is crowned by the towering fronds of the gigantic Herb Christopher." As St. John appropriated to himself the flowers typical of light and sunshine, and so ousted Baldur, in like manner St. Olaf, St. George, and St. Michael, all of whose names are associated with traditions of encounters with dragons, took the place of Thor, who wielded the hammer, and slew the frost giants. The House-leek used to be known as Thor's Beard, but afterwards became St. George's Beard. In the North the Rowan used to be called "Thor's Helper," because it is said to have bent itself to his grasp, when, on his way to the land of the Frost-giants, he had to cross a river which had been made to overflow by the magic spell of a sorceress. More, however, respecting the gods when we have given a parting glance at the saints and their plants.

After giving a number of illustrations of this subject, Archdeacon Hare remarks: "The foregoing examples are enough to justify the conjecture that the Filbert-tree may perhaps owe its name to St. Philibert, whose festival was on the 22nd of

August." He then goes on to discuss the half-dozen etymologies which have been suggested for the name, and seems pretty conclusively to show that this is as probable an idea as any other that can be brought forward.[6] If, then, we have found that nearly every European saint of importance has a flower dedicated to him, we shall find a similar thing in the East. In the "Bundahesh," one of the sacred books of the Parsîs, we find that every single flower is appropriated to an angel. The Laurestinus was said to be dedicated to St. Faine (an Irish abbess in the sixth century), and in the following lines her name is mentioned:—

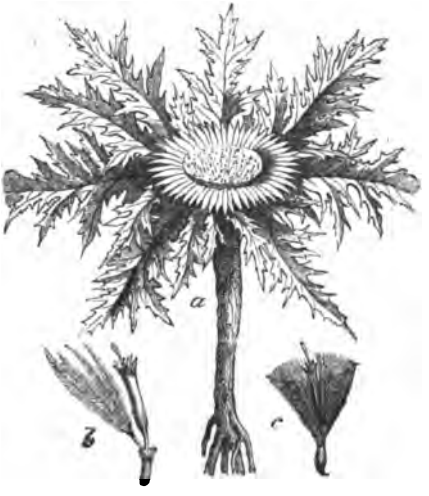
> "Whether the weather be snow or raine,
> We're sure to see the flower of St. Faine.
> Raine comes but seldom, and often snow,
> And yet this Viburnam is sure to blow."

I may now sum up the results of our study of those flowers which the saints have claimed in the interesting words of another. Mrs. Lincoln writes thus of superstitions with regard to the blossoming of plants:—"In Italy the *Dead Nettle* being in blossom about the day of St. Vincent, a martyr who suffered for Christianity, under the Emperor Diocletian, in the year 304, the flower is consecrated to him. The *Winter Hellebore*, in blossom about the time of the conversion of St. Paul, was supposed to commemorate that event. The *Crocus* was dedicated to St. Valentine, as it appears about the period of that saint's day, which is regarded as peculiarly sacred to affection. One species of *Daisy* appears about the time of St. Margaret's Day; this is called in France La Belle Marguerite, and in England, Herb Margaret. The *Crown Imperial* blossoms about the 18th of March, the day of St. Edward, King of the West Saxons—nature thus, as was imagined, honouring the day with a royal flower. The *Cardamine*, or *Our Lady's Flower*, distinguished for

its pure white, is dedicated to the Virgin Mary. The *Marygold*, so called from a fancied resemblance of the florets of its disc to rays of glory, is also consecrated to the Virgin. On the day of St. George, the patron saint of England, the *Bluebells*, called *Field-hyacinths* in that country, tinged the meadows and pastures with their deep-blue colour; they were thought to afford an emblem of the empire of the ocean over which England assumes the rule. The St. John's Wort blossoms near that saint's day. The *Scarlet Lychnis*, called the Great Candlestick (*Candelabrum ingens*), was supposed to be lighted up for St. John the Baptist, who 'was a burning and a shining light.' The *White Lily* expands about the time of the Annunciation, affording another coincidence of the blossoming of white flowers at the festivals consecrated to the Mother of Christ. The *Roses* of summer are said to fade about the period of St. Mary Magdalen's Day. It was during the Middle Ages, when the minds of men were influenced by the blindest superstition, that they thus imagined every operation of nature to be emblematical of something connected with their religious faith. Although these superstitions are trifling and absurd, they are interesting as connected with the annals of the human mind, and as showing us the origin of many names of plants." The reader will bear in mind that the writer here quoted was an American and not an English lady.

From the saints let us now turn a brief glance upon the heroes and gods of ancient times,—the saints have, as will be seen, nearly usurped their place in these prosaic days,—and let us see what kind of wreaths they wore. Charlemagne's name is traditionally associated with a plant, the Carline Thistle. The story goes that when that Emperor was on one occasion engaged in war, a pestilence broke out in his army, which carried off large numbers of his men. This so troubled Charlemagne that he prayed to God for help, and in answer to his prayers

an angel appeared and shot with a cross-bow, telling the Emperor to mark the spot where the arrow fell. The plant which the arrow indicated would, the angel said, prove the best of all antidotes, and stay the raging of the plague.[7] On the strength of this tradition people were wont to bestow the highest praises on this plant, which, as the angel indicated, performed a miraculous cure in the camp. The flower is large and handsome, and being, like the other "immortals," little subject to decay, it is often fixed against the cottage doors in Germany, France, and Spain, for the purpose of indicating the state of the atmosphere, just as a bit of seaweed is still hung in English cottages. The Carline Thistle regularly closes before rain, and so indicates the proximity of a downpour.



CARLINE THISTLE (*Carlina acaulis*).
a, plant; *b*, blossom enlarged; *c*, blossom.

One name for the Goat's Beard is Joseph's Flower, which seems to owe its origin to the pictures in which the husband of Mary was represented as a long-bearded old man. Some are disposed, however, to regard the name as an allusion to the other and more popular one of *Go-to-bed-at-noon*, because another Joseph refused to do so; but this is certainly far-fetched. The Dutch call the flower *Joseph's bloem* at times, its general name being, as in England *Geitebaard*, or Goat's Beard. In Germany the white double Daffodil is called *Josephs-stab*, or Joseph's

staff. A fanciful resemblance between the form of the grain of one plant (*Coix lacryma*), which is hard, polished, and bead-like, and the appearance of the tear-drop as it falls sparkling from the eye, gave rise to the name of Job's Tears. The grains were imagined to drop out, as Job poured out his tears unto God. The plant has likewise been called Juno's Tears, for the same reason; and this name has also been transferred to the Vervain or Verbena.

With the Venus of the Romans we became familiar when speaking of our Virgin Lady, and we have had constantly to refer to Jupiter in one way or another in connection with flowers. But we may here notice that several flowers and plants bore the name of this divinity, and if it be borne in mind that Thor takes his place in Norse mythology, we shall see how popular a god he was. For, taking the name of Jupiter first, we have Jupiter's Staff as the name of the Great Mullein (*Verbascum Thapsus*), and "a sort of clary is called Jupiter's Distaff, because the top of the stalk looks something like a distaff, with yellow flax wrapt round it." The Anthyllis, or Silver-bush, is commonly called Jupiter's Beard, both in England and Germany. The same name used to be given also to the House-leek, and under the form of *Joubarbe* and *Jovis barba* was so known in French and Latin. As Jupiter was regarded in Germany under the aspect of Thunderer, we find the House-leek there called Donners-bart. This, along with its other name, Hauswurz, which answers to our House-leek, gave rise to the superstition that a house on which it grew was safe from lightning. We shall find that many other plants gave the same immunity to persons and buildings. Jupiter's Eye was, according to some old writers, an Italian name for the House-leek. It Somersetshire the Horse-daisy or Ox-eye is devoted to the Thunder god, a curious circumstance when considered in connection with another fact,—

viz., that Acorns are there called Jove's Nuts. Now we all know that the Oak is emphatically Jove's tree, but how is it that in Somersetshire these two names, not to mention others bearing on ancient religion and mythology, live on when they have died out, or never existed, in other parts of England? A careful study of this question will yet produce good fruit, by leading us to a clearer understanding of the condition and nationality of the people who once occupied those swamps and marshes where these names are still to be found.

The Oak, above all trees, says Grimm, was devoted to the Thunderer. Several districts of Lower Saxony and Westphalia have until quite recent times preserved vestiges of *holy oaks*, to which the people paid a half-heathen, half-Christian homage. Thus, in the principality of Minden, on Easter Sunday, the young people of both sexes used with loud cries of joy to dance around an old Oak-tree; while in a thicket near the village of Wormeln there stands a holy oak, to which the inhabitants of this and the neighbouring village still make a solemn procession every year. This will remind many readers of the Wistman's Wood on Dartmoor, concerning which so much has been written. I dare not expose myself to the temptation of writing on this subject, as it would require a chapter to treat it properly; and there is the less reason for me to touch upon it here, since the notes supply abundant information.[8] In the North the Oak was naturally under the special protection of Thor (or Thunar), whose name we still retain in Thursday and Thunder. The Romans called the Acorn Jovglans or Juglans, which probably refers to its being sacred to Jupiter. We have not retained the names of the old gods of the North in many of our plant-names in the south of England, though they occur more frequently in the north.

Mrs. Bray tells us that the people on Dartmoor used to have

a plant which they called Thor-mantle. I believe this to have been the Burdock. "The name of the wise, white-bearded Odin does not seem to have been connected with many plants. His, however, was the blue-flowered *Geranium sylvaticum* (called King's Hood, or Mountain-flower in some parts of England), of which the German name was *Gottesgnade*, or 'God's grace,' and to which Gerarde gives the name of *Geranium Gratia Dei* (although the Hedge Hyssop is now known as *Gratia Dei*, or Gnadenkraut, according to some writers). It was probably thus known in monastic herbaries, but it had been 'Odin's Grace' or 'Odin's Favour' in the days of heathenism, and is still occasionally so called in Iceland, where it is common. Its large sky-blue flowers were formerly gathered there for dyeing a blue-grey, although the art is said to be now lost. The grey vests and kirtles of the champions of the sagas were probably stained with this dye. The colour is said to have been 'fittest for fighting men'; and we can hardly help connecting the grey cloak or 'hackle,' in which Odin was always wrapped when he appeared on middle earth, with the flower of 'Odin's Favour,' from which the dye was procured. The hood, or 'tarn' cap, —the cap of darkness, which enabled those who carried it to become invisible at will, and which also formed part of Odin's attire,—is represented by another plant, the Blue Aconite, sometimes called 'Odin's Helm.' Its more general names, however, were 'Thor's Hat' and 'Tyr's Helm'; since the helmlike shape of its flowers suggested the two great fighting gods of the North, rather than the wiser Odin. The Aconite is one of the native plants of Northern Europe; and when the Benedictines invaded the domains of Thor, it became 'Monk's Hood,' the cowl of the good brothers replacing the helm of Tyr."

Mr. King has not exhausted the subject, nor shall I; but it may be added that the Danish name for Aconite was Troldhat,

the hat or helmet of the "troll" or giant, who sometimes replaced the gods. Since Tyr, from whom we get our Tuesday, has been named, we may remark that the March Violet (*Viola Martis*) was called *Tys-fiola* in the Old Norse language, while the pretty Daphne (*Mezereon*) was also devoted to him. Of Freyja I spoke in a former chapter, and in this I have already spoken of Baldur, so that they may be passed by without further notice. As we have Sunflowers and Moondaisies for the gods of the first two days in the week, and have seen how the gods whose names are connected with Tuesday (*Tyr*), Wednesday (*Woden*), Thursday (*Thor*), and *Friday* (*Freyja* or *Frigga*) each had flowers called after them, we may ask whether he who gives his name to Saturday (*Saturn*) has not received equal honour. Alas! he came so late in the week, that all the honours had been shared before he arrived, and thus he seems to have gained only a disputed title to *one* flower among our earlier islanders.[9] The Crow-foot was called in Anglo-Saxon *Sâtor-lâðe*, or Saturn's Loathing. It is known as Gallicrus, because, as Gerarde explains it, "the crest or tuft is spred or stretched out abroad like a cock's foote set down vpon the ground. The stalke is cleare and vpright, of a glistering purple colour, or rather violet. One tuft is divided into fower or five branches." So far as my researches have gone I have been unable to find any other flower to place upon the brow of Saturn, and the meaning of even this one is doubtful. This is all the more to be wondered at since some have tried to identify him with Vishnu, who, far from being thus coolly treated, is represented as wearing wreaths of flowers about his neck, while he holds a wheel or chakra in his *fourth* hand.

There is one flower whose name indicates its sweetness, or its beauty; two such good qualities, that it is difficult to know which of them can claim the honour of having given the name

of *Dianthus* to the Pink. This word is of Greek origin, and means "the Flower of Jove." Whether it was ever employed in gracing the statues of Jupiter or not I cannot say; but we may learn something from another name by which the same flower is popularly known—Carnation.

> "The fairest flowers of the season
> Are our Carnations and streaked Gillyflowers,"

says Shakspere. It has been generally supposed that the name has reference to the flesh (*carnis*) colour of the blossoms, but in Sussex we still hear a pronunciation of the name which leads us to the right conclusion. The peasantry will often point with pride to their "cornations," which reminds us that Spenser calls on us to—

> "Bring Coronations and Sops-in-Wine
> Worn of paramours."

The old spelling, and the Sussex pronunciation "coronation" or "cornation,"—for both occur in the herbals of three hundred years ago,—take us at once to the origin of the name. The plant was one of those used in the formation of garlands (*coronæ*), and so the word is similar in meaning to *Coronella*, a name still applied to another handsome plant once employed for similar purposes. The shape, beauty, and manner of growth of the flower would admirably suit it for such an use. As I have shown elsewhere, Pliny gives a long list of flowers employed in making wreaths and garlands by the Romans and Athenians, and Nicander gives similar lists of Greek garland plants, in which the Carnation holds so high a place that it was called by the name which it still retains—Dianthus, or Flower of Jove.

That the custom of adorning statues once prevailed, and still does so in the East, is certain. The celebrated traveller Fa Hian,

in describing his pilgrimage through those countries where the religion of Buddha prevailed, speaks with enthusiasm of the wealth of flowers with which the people of Ceylon paid homage to their gods, while native works constantly allude to the profusion of flowers used on such occasions, and speak of the formation of innumerable gardens by various kings, in which flowers were grown for the purposes of the temples. I have myself seen the celebrated Lotus growing in pools within the sacred precincts of Buddhist sanctuaries, the flowers of which were daily placed in presence of the idol or idols there worshipped.

More than one plant has been dedicated to Mercury. There is Hercules' Woundwort, or Hercules' All-heal, supposed by some to be the Panacea spoken of by ancient Greek writers on plants. Theophrastus says there were three plants bearing the name of Panacea or All-heal—one devoted to Cheiron, another to the god of physicians and medicine, Æsculapius, and a third to Herakles. The last epithet seems to have been meant to denote, however, the potency of the herb, rather than the name of an individual or god. We find a Poppy and a Thorn called by the same name. Pliny supposes the names to have been applied to these and similar plants in honour of the persons who discovered them, just as we call a plant a Fuchsia or Linnæa after Linnæus or Fuchs. The application of Mercury's name to plants may be traced back to classical antiquity; Herb Mercury, for example, having a history which can be followed through French (*Mercuriale*), Italian (*Mercorella*), and Latin, back even to Greek times. We still read or speak of Mercury's Violet—the Mariet, Dog's Mercury, French Mercury, and English Mercury, the latter being also known as All-good, or Good King Henry. This plant (*Chenopodium*) is called in German also Gut Heinrich, or Roth Heinrich, the names Heinz and Heinrich being favourites with German elves and goblins. It

has been suggested on this account, that the plant, which is found in large green masses in nearly the same situations as those delighted in by the little Herb Robert, was claimed by Henry as a companion of Robin Goodfellow, and so belongs to the list of plants which form the garland of Pixy or Puck.

The name of Heinrich enters into many plant designations in German, but their study must not be entered on here. I must come to a close somewhere, and as it is impossible to give the reader everything that may be known about the flowers appropriated by saints, heroes, or gods, I will once more appeal to the interesting work of another for words which may suitably finish our chapter. "Although it is not impossible" (says Mr. King) "that almost every plant which the old herbalists record as bearing the name of some saint, or as distinguished by some specially religious epithet, might be traced back, if we had the means, to the days of heathenism, there are many of which we have only the later 'canonization,' and which we must accept as the more direct representatives of the monastic garden and herbary. How amply these were stocked, and with how many of the plants most famous in ancient leech-craft, is evident from a glance at the very curious plans of the great monastery of St. Gall, drawn up, it is said, by Eginhard, toward the end of the eighth century. In these, every bed in the garden is marked out, and the name of the herb with which it should be filled carefully inserted. It was, no doubt, from their great virtues as 'All-heals,' or 'Singular Wound-herbs,' that such names as 'Angelica' and 'Archangel' were bestowed on the plants that still bear them. The 'Herba Benedicta,' 'Herb Bennett,' the 'Blessed Herb' (*Geum urbanum*), was a remedy for nearly all diseases under the sun. Its graceful trefoiled leaf, and the five golden petals of its blossoms, symbolizing the Holy Trinity and the five wounds of our Lord, early attracted the attention of the artist-monk; and toward the end of the thirteenth

century the plant frequently occurs as an architectural decoration, sometimes in patterns on the walls, and sometimes in the leafage encircling pier capitals. The Vervain (*Verbena*), called the 'Holy Herb,' should perhaps have been placed in the former division, since it was, according to Pliny, one of the sacred plants of the Druids, and was gathered by them with all manner of mystic ceremonies. It is not easy to see why its slender spikes of grey flowers should have been held in such repute, unless the old rhyme, itself half a charm, gives us the reason :—

"'Hail to thee, Holy Herb!
Growing on the ground
On the Mount of Olivet
First wert thou found.

"'Thou art good for many an ill,
And healest many a wound;
In the name of sweet Jesus,
I lift thee from the ground.'

"The Trefoil, or 'Herb Trinity,' has an especial interest from the use which, as tradition asserts, was made of it by St. Patrick (although the story is to be found in none of the lives—not even the latest and most legendary, printed by Colgan), as an illustration of the divine mystery. The leaf which is now generally recognised as the Irish emblem is that of the White Clover, but the name Shamrock (Seamrog) seems to be generic, and is applied also to the Purple Clover, the Speedwell, the Pimpernel, and the Wood-sorrel" (for which see more fully in a later chapter). "The leaf of the Herb Trinity is of course 'noisome to witches.' The Veronica, or Small Speedwell, one of the plants to which the name Shamrock is given, was also effective against evil spells, and its bright blue flowers were thought to display, in their form and markings, a representation of the kerchief of St. Veronica, impressed with the features of our Lord."

Thus it will be seen that in every part of Europe, from the Emerald Isle to Germany, Spain, Italy, and Greece, plants have long and intimately, for this reason or that, been associated with the saints of the Church, the gods of mythology, or the heroes of antiquity; and nothing could perhaps give us a better idea of the simple faith and devotion of our ancestors, and their regard for the beings in whose hands they believed their weal or woe to be confided.

"How may various flowers
Did I, in bygone hours,
Cull for the gods, and in their honour strew.
In vain how many a prayer
I breathed into the air,
And made, with many forms, obeisance due.

* * * * *

"But they, the truly wise,
Who know and realize
Where dwells the SHEPHERD OF THE WORLDS, will ne'er
To any visible shrine,
As if it were divine,
Deign to raise hands of worship or of prayer."

CALDWELL'S *Specimens of Tamil Poetry.*

DAHLIA VARIABILIS.

CHAPTER VI.

TRADITIONS ABOUT FLOWERS.

EVERYWHERE the Rose seems to be a favourite flower, and its connection with various traditions is naturally as marked as is its place in the poetry and literature of this and other lands. In the East, particularly in Persia, the Rose flourishes in great beauty, and is highly prized. We find that one of the most famous Persian works is called the Gulistan, or "Garden of Roses."[1] An interesting tale is told

of Sâdi, the author of this collection of moral sentences, and one of the most famous of Persian poets, which leads us to think that he must have regarded the Rose as his favourite flower. Sâdi was once a slave, but his master had promised him his liberty. He was tardy, however, in keeping his promise, and Sâdi is therefore said to have gone to him one day with a Rose in his hand. "Do good to thy servant whilst thou hast the power," said the slave to his master, "for time is fleeting, and the season of power is often as transient as the duration of this flower. Do not longer delay the fulfilment of thy promise, my master." These words, partly expressed in the poetic language of flowers, are said to have so touched the master's heart that he gave Sâdi his liberty at once, and had the joy of seeing him become famous as a writer of noble verse. A festival is held in Persia, called the Feast of Roses, which lasts the whole time they are in bloom.

> "And all is ecstasy, for now
> The valley holds its Feast of Roses;
> That joyous time, when pleasures pour
> Profusely round, and in their shower
> Hearts open, like the season's Rose."

The Persians frequently connect the Rose with the nightingale or Bulbul. Tradition says that the bird utters a plaintive cry whenever the flower is gathered, and that it will hover around the plant in the spring-time, till, overpowered by its sweetness, it falls senseless to the ground. The Rose is supposed to burst forth from its bud at the opening song of its lover, the nightingale, and thus the Venus of flowers is associated with the Apollo of birds, and love is set forth in the most poetic fashion that sentiment could devise. You may place a handful of fragrant herbs and flowers before the nightingale (say the Persian poets),

yet he wishes not in his constant and faithful heart for more than the sweet breath of his beloved Rose.

"Though rich the spot
With every flower this earth has got,
What is it to the nightingale
If there his darling Rose is not?"

From India we get a tradition respecting the first discovery of the method of preparing the celebrated Attar of Roses, so highly prized for perfuming the dress and person. To please the voluptuous Jehanghir, it is said that his favourite sultana caused the bath in the palace garden to be filled to the brim with rose-water. The action of the sun soon concentrated the oily particles which were found floating on its surface, and the attendant, supposing the water to have become corrupt, began to skim it for the purpose of taking off the oil. The globules burst under the process, and emitted such a delightful odour, that the idea of preparing this beautiful perfume was at once suggested. Truth, it is said, is stranger than fiction. When on my voyage to China, our first calling place was Port Saïd. We here heard of a Jew (mark the nationality) who possessed a large store of curiosities,—Turkey slippers, shawls, caps, sweets, and perfumes, amongst many other things,—and resolved to pay him a visit. He presently produced some tiny bottles, containing a few drops of the choicest attar. They could not be sold singly on any account for less than several shillings, but if we would take a number we should have them at a great bargain! So we speculated, a friend and myself; and went back to the vessel chuckling over the delightful fragrance with which we should perfume our cabin when we reached the Red Sea; and should we not drive off the enemy of untried sailors—sea sickness—with our panacea the next time he attacked us? A

secure corner was found in our portmanteaus for the precious treasures we now possessed, and we proceeded on our journey. In a few days the excessive heat set in, the ship began to roll, and internal upheavings indicated that we were yet scarcely to be ranked as "able-bodied seamen." Now was the time for the attar! So a rush was made to the secret spot, and the choice little bottles were carefully taken out. Our handkerchiefs were got in readiness, the tiny stoppers extracted, and *one* drop of the precious liquid, worth its weight in gold, poured forth. But who will disclose or guess the sequel? For days we could smell the *attar*, which was anything but Attar of Roses, for we had been *jewed!*

My kind friend, Mr. W. Jones, F.S.A., the author of "Finger Ring Lore" and other works on folklore and kindred subjects, has written me respecting the origin of the Moss Rose. There is a German tradition which tells that an angel, bent on a work of love, came down to earth in mortal guise. He was grieved at what he saw of the sin and misery of man, and sought a place of repose. Every place was closed against the messenger of love:—

"And the Spirit dejected, sat beneath
The shade of a Rose, whose fragrant breath
Lull'd him in slumber mild.
The ev'ning dew as it fell around,
Left not a trace on the saintly ground,
Where, wrapp'd in the folds of a sleep profound,
Lay the fair and heavenly child.

"The morning sun broke the angel's trance,
And he said, as he turn'd a grateful glance
On the sweet and lovely Rose—
'Thou hast yielded the shelter that man denied,
In the vain conceit of his stubborn pride,
A proof of my love with thee abide,
And nurture thine own repose.'

"And the green moss gather'd around the stem,
While the dewdrops shone like a diadem,
Crowning the blushing flow'r,
That now the wrath of the wind defies,
Exultant looks to the fostering skies,
And shielded thus in its brilliant dyes,
Gives signs of an angel's pow'r!"

These lines were written by Mr. Jones about thirty years ago, and published in a volume with other pieces. I am grateful to him for so kindly bringing the legend under my notice, and giving me permission to use his version of the same. It would be as foolish to attempt to *praise* as to *paint* the Rose, says one writer, for it is a flower which needs no commendation. It has been even suggested that the utter inability of man to set forth its charms led to its being considered as the symbol of silence. If the idea is far-fetched, and scarcely accords with the fact that poets and painters have alike exhausted their powers in setting forth its beauty, the hint is suggestive. In Waldeck it is the Rose under whose silence treasures are safely concealed.

There are various traditions to account for the colour of the Rose. Thus the red Rose is said to have sprung from the brands which had been lighted at Bethlehem for the purpose of burning to death a holy maiden who had been wrongfully accused of some crime, but who, in her hour of anguish, prayed to God that He would help her. The fire was miraculously quenched, and the brands originated the first red Roses that ever man saw. Another tradition tells us that the colour was derived from the blood of Adonis. This is the heathen, that the Christian tradition. According to one legend the Rose was originally white, till Cupid, dancing amongst the gods, upset a cup of nectar upon it, and it became red; while yet another fable says that it was not from the blood of Adonis that the Rose received its colour, but from that of Venus, who in her haste to relieve Adonis when

in pain, pierced her foot with a thorn. A white Rose was growing close by, and as the blood fell upon it the flower was reddened by its contact, and has ever since remained so. Spenser speaks of a thing—

> "White as the native Rose before the change
> Which Venus' blood did in her leaves impress."

Thus the Rose was originally white, according to these legends; but Mandeville says that the white Roses sprung from the unkindled brands which were employed for the purpose of burning the holy maiden of Bethlehem. Bion, in his epitaph on Adonis, represents the Rose as springing from the blood of that god, as the Anemone sprung from the tears shed over him by Venus. This, in Archdeacon Hare's opinion, led to the German application of the name *Adonis-blume*, or Adonis' flower, sometimes to the Anemone, sometimes to the red Chamomile, which somewhat resembles the Anemone, and might easily be supposed to be sprinkled or tinted with blood. The Rose has long been an ecclesiastical emblem, and in heathen times was regarded as a mystic flower by Scandinavian and German alike. There is a Wild Rose growing over part of the cathedral of Hildesheim, the roots of which are within the crypt, concerning which tradition says that it was growing on the spot before the foundations of the church were laid by Charlemagne. It thus claims to be more than a thousand years old. But the Rose has already taken up too much of our attention, and we must here reluctantly leave its society to turn to traditions of other plants.[3]

The pretty Forget-me-not is a flower so well known, and so much admired, that we are all prepared to hear that some tradition is linked to its name. I will not here repeat what I have said elsewhere about the German knight, but will give another legend of quite a different character. Once upon a time a

shepherd was driving his flock over the Ilsenstein, when, wearied with his journey, he leaned upon his staff. Instantly the mountain opened, for in his staff was the "Spring-wort," of which we shall hear again. Within the opening thus made he saw the Princess Ilse, who bade him fill his pockets with gold. This he was not loth to do; and having obeyed the royal behest, was just about to leave, when the Princess exclaimed, "Forget not the best!" alluding to his wonder-working staff. Thinking, however, that she meant the best gold, he left his staff leaning against the wall of rock, and proceeded to gather up more of the precious metal, when suddenly the mountain clashed together, and severed him in twain. In some versions of the story, it is the pale-blue flower—

> "The blue flower, which—Brahmans say—
> Blooms nowhere but in Paradise"—

which exclaims in feeble, piteous tones, "Forget-me-not," but its cry is unheeded. Thus originated the name of this beautiful flower, if we may believe the story. Even our little ones love to gather

> "By rivulet or wet road-side,
> That blue and bright-eyed flow'ret of the brook,
> Hope's gentle gem, the sweet Forget-me-not."

The name by which the flower is commonly known is certainly much prettier and more romantic, not to say sentimental, than that of Bugloss, by which one kind of Forget-me-not is known in Devonshire. In some parts of England the country people still call the Speedwell or Bird's Eye by the name Forget-me-not; and those who wish to trace the history of the name, and follow its ups and downs, can do so by reference to the works quoted in the notes.[8]

Very similar traditions to that just recorded are connected

with other flowers; and there is more than one "Spring-wort." These flowers are generally blue,—the azure of the sky, which is Bertha's blue eyes (as Mr. Conway says),—and one of these blue flowers is the Flax. Here the myth seems to refer to industry, for flax is continually associated with the spinning, industrious elves; and so we are reminded of the farmer who told his sons that there was a rich treasure hid in their field, which they ascertained was only to be gained by diligence in cultivation. Another of the flowers associated with this class of legends is the Primrose; and Mr. King is wrong when he says that this flower has no fairy legend belonging to it. At any rate its twin-sister, the Cowslip, is still called Fairy-cup in some parts of England, for its blossoms are the cups which hold the fairy gifts; and elsewhere I have shown how this "Key-flower," as the Germans call it, unlocks the treasures of spring, and reveals its stores of gold and jewels. This is one of the Spring-worts, a word which has a double meaning; "Spring" being applicable both to the lock and key, and also to the season of the year.

Much has been written respecting the traditions connected with what M. de Gubernatis calls *l'herbe qui ouvre*. In Iceland it is believed, for example, that Herbparis will open any lock, whence it is known as *Lasa-gras*, or the plant which loosens or unlocks anything. "The Blasting-root, or Spreng-wurzel, commonly called *Spring-wurzel*, or Spring-root, is probably a Fern-root. Pliny records the superstition concerning it, almost in the same form in which it is now found in Germany. If any one touches a lock with it, the lock, however strong, must yield. In Switzerland it is carried in the right pocket to render the bearer invulnerable to dagger or bullet; and in the Hartz mountains it is said to reveal treasures. One cannot easily find it one's self, but generally the woodpecker (according to Pliny also the raven; in Switzerland the hoopoe; in the Tyrol

the swallow) will bring it, under the following circumstances. When the bird visits its nest, the nest must be stopped up with wood. The bird will open it by touching it with Spreng-wurzel. Meantime a fire or a red cloth must be placed near by, which will so frighten the bird that it will let the magical root fall." I must refer to the chapters which treat of Superstitions respecting Flowers, and Magic Flower-lore, for more information of a similar character. In Russia we find a tradition respecting one of these plants, which grows in swampy meadows in spring-time, and is known as the Rasriv-trava. Housebreakers apply this plant to the locks they wish to pick, and they open immediately! Surely this is the reason why our own countrymen have become such adepts in the art of entering houses. We have heard of their carrying charms of various kinds; but will our police take the hint and be on the look-out for discovering the Rasriv-trava on them? It may be well, perhaps, to explain that *Rasriv* means to open, spring, or unlock; and *trava* is the Russian word for plant or herb. It is well known that the season of the year called spring owes its name to its unlocking Nature, after its having been sealed up for the winter; and, if we may be unwilling to accept all the interpretations of myths which have been advanced of late by the promoters of the solar theory, I think we shall not hesitate to refer this one to that source at least. Similar traditions are associated with the Mandrake, and the Fern whose seeds possess magic virtue. This is called in Russia *paporotnik*.

It is related of the hoopoe that one of these birds had a nest in an old wall in which there was a crevice. The proprietor, noticing the rent in his wall, came and plastered it over; and when the hoopoe returned to feed her young she found that the nest had been covered up, so that she was unable to enter. Forthwith she flew away in quest of a plant called *Poa*, supposed

to be the same as Sainfoin or Lucerne; and having found a spray, returned and applied it to the plaster, which at once fell off from the crack, and gave her free admission to her nest. Then she went forth to seek food; but during her absence the master again plastered up the hole. The obstacle was again removed by means of the magic Spring-wort or *Poa*, and once again the hole was plastered up and opened in the same way. We presume that the owner abandoned his attempt as hopeless after this third trial, and left the bird in possession of the field. Pliny tells a similar tale of the woodpecker. He says that this bird brings up her young in holes, and if the entrance be plugged up never so tightly, the parent bird is able to force out the plug. One early writer tells us of a bird which in Latin is called Merops, but which the Germans were familiar with under the name of Bömheckel (or Baumhacker, which means woodpecker). This bird makes its nest in high trees, and when any one covers up its young with something which prevents the access of the bird to its nest, it flies off in search of a herb. This is brought in the merop's beak, and held over the obstacle till it falls off or gives way. The plant is called *Herba meropis* or the Woodpecker's Plant, but in magical books is known as *Chora*.

Sometimes these plants acted in a different way upon the birds who used them. Traditions were rife in the Middle Ages which attributed life-giving properties to plants. One writer tells us that a faithful old man long ago related to him how he had seen two little birds a-fighting, till one was overcome. In this state of exhaustion it went and ate of a certain herb, then returned to the onslaught. When the old man had observed this frequently, he took away the herb upon which the bird was wont to feed. Then the little bird came again in search of the plant, and when it found it not, it set up a great cry and died.[4]

Though a chapter might be devoted to the study of traditions associated with the crucifixion of Jesus, I must be content with giving them merely a passing notice. When the soldiers mocked Jesus, a sceptre was put into His hands in the shape of a Reed. When pictures of the scene were painted, or statues made representing the King of the Jews with His crown and mace, it was usual to make our large reed-like plant (*Typha latifolia*), which grows in marshes and rivers with a black head like a poker, serve as the sceptre. On this account the plant has gained the name of Reed-mace. Many are the traditions respecting the Crown of Thorns. Ancient legends say that the Libyan Thorn (*Paliurus* or *Libyan rhamnus*) was the plant from which the crown was made, and it has in consequence been named Christ's Thorn. The same name has for a different reason been given to the Holly, which is used for Christmas decorations. Thus the people of Denmark and Germany call it Christ's-thorn, and other kindred languages have the same word. Among the Italians, according to an old French traveller, one kind of thorn (the Berberis or Barberry) bore the name of Holy Thorn, on account of its supposed connection with the crown made for Christ.

When Sir John Mandeville visited the Holy Land in the fourteenth century, he found that a crown was preserved there, which was passed off as that actually worn by the Saviour; and the statements of this writer on the subject are very curious. He says of our Lord that "in that nyghte that He was taken, He was ylad into a gardyn; and there He was first examyned righte scharply; and there the Jewes scorned Hym, and maden Hym a croune of the braunches of Albespyne, that is White Thorn, that grew in the same gardyn, and setten yt on His heved, so faste and so sore, that the blood ran down be many places of Hys visage, and of His necke, and of His schuldres. And therefore hath the White Thorn many vertues; for he that berethe a

braunche on him thereof, no thondre, ne no maner of tempest may dere him; ne in the hows that yt is inne may non evylle gost entre. Aftreward was oure Lord lade forthe before the bischoppes and the maysters of the lawe, to another gardyn of Anne; and there also He was examyned, repreved, and scorned, and crowned eft with a White Thorn, that men clepethe Barbarynes, that grew in that gardyn; and that hath also many vertues. And afterwards He was lad in to a gardyn of Cayphas, and there He was crowned with Eglentier. And after He was lad into the chambre of Pylate, and there He was examined and crouned. And the Jews setten Him in a chayre and cladde Him in a mantelle; and there made they the croune of the Jonkes of the see, that is to say rushes of the see; and there they kneled to Hym and scorned Hym seyenge: 'Heyl, Kyng of Jewes.' And of this croune half ys in Parys, and the other half at Costantynoble. And this croune had Christ on Hys heved, whan He was don upon the cross; and therefore oughte men to worschipe it, and hold it more worthi than any othere." This, as Archdeacon Hare remarks, is

WHITETHORN (*Cratægus Oxyacantha*).

a, spray of bloom; *b*, blossom seen from above; *c*, in section; *d*, without corolla; *e*, fruit; *f*, the same in section.

an ingenious specimen of the manner in which the pretensions of contending claimants are to be adjusted.

In Swabia the missionaries taught their people to regard the Blackthorn as the tree from which Christ's crown was made, just as in France and England they ascribed the same honour to the Whitethorn or Hawthorn. In France this latter bears on this account the name of *l'épine noble.* In Austria the boys used on Good Friday to run after the little Jewish children and thrust "Thorn-apples" into their hair—a custom which would seem to have reference to the commemoration of the mocking of Jesus. As Mandeville said of the Whitethorn and *Barbarynes,* so it is said of the Blackthorn: "It hath many vertues." It furnished the material in Germany for the divining-rod or wishing-rod, and was believed to cure many diseases. In Sussex still the inner bark is scraped off and made into tea, as a cure for certain complaints. In Northamptonshire wine is made of the fruit, as a specific against various internal disorders. The sanctity of the Whitethorn may be due to the heathen traditions current even before the time of Christ, for Virgil tells us that the

BLACKTHORN (*Prunus spinosa*).
a, spray of bloom; *b*, spray of fruit; *c*, stamens; *d*, *e*, sections of fruit; *f*, kernel.

Thistle and Thorn sprang up at the death of Daphnis, a Sicilian hero. His mother placed him when an infant in a charming valley in a laurel-grove, from which he derived his name, *daphne* being the Greek word for a laurel. The Thorn was hung over doorways to ward off witchcraft, and avert calamity. In some places the following charm is employed for the purpose of preventing a thorn from causing a fester where it has entered the person :—

> "Our Saviour was of a Virgin born,
> His head was crowned with a crown of thorn ;
> It never canker'd nor festered at all,
> And I hope in Christ Jesus this never shaull."

The Whitethorn is one of the trees most in favour with the "small people;" and in some parts of Ireland, as well as in Brittany, it is supposed to be unsafe to gather a leaf even from certain old and solitary thorns, which grow in sheltered hollows of the moorland, and are regarded as the trysting-places of the fairies. Mandeville speaks of "Jonkes of the see," by which the prickly Rush of Eastern tradition is meant; this being in all probability a species of Buckthorn called Nabk (or *Zizyphus spina Christi*), although there is another spring plant (*Paliurus aculeatus*) which grows in sterile places bordering on the Mediterranean, and sometimes bears the name of Christ's Thorn. But into these critical questions the reader will not care to enter further.

We must next turn our attention to the Cross itself, and it is really astonishing what a mass of traditions centre around it. "The cross of our blessed Lord" (says Mr. King) "may be said to fling its shadow over the whole vegetable world. From this time the trees and flowers which had been associated with heathen rites and deities began to be connected with holier names, and not unfrequently with the events of the Crucifixion itself." He

adds a remark which I will here introduce, as being appropriate to our present study. "It is unnecessary to discuss in this place the historical truth of the discovery of our Lord's cross by the Empress Helena, said to have been made in the year 326. The great argument against it is the silence of Eusebius, who died about A.D. 338; but it is at least certain that a cross, said to have been that of our Lord, was publicly shown and honoured in Jerusalem during the episcopate of St. Cyril (350-386). It was after this time, and probably as a natural result of the interest awakened by the asserted discovery, that the legend which told the history of the tree of the cross gradually took shape,—working into itself many older traditions, especially those which had made Hebron and its neighbourhood the chief resting-place of Adam after his expulsion from Paradise. With slight variations the story (respecting the miraculous origin of the tree from which the cross was made, and its equally marvellous career) occurs in all the great mediæval legendaries. It was told also in verse, and formed the subject of many stained windows and of much tapestry and wall-painting." A very general belief is that the cross was made of Aspen, and that the trembling of the leaves is a proof that the tree was so employed. In Syria this tree is called *Khashafa*, meaning "to be agitated;" and the sacred Bó-tree of the Buddhists presents the same peculiarity of constant quivering. The explanation which the Buddhists give of the matter is that the leaves are in constant motion out of regard for their great sage; whilst the people of Syria aver, with the people of other lands, that the cross was made of Aspen, and that its leaves have trembled ever since in commemoration of the event. The Russian peasant, however, will tell you that the leaves of this tree owe their constant motion to the fact that Judas hanged himself upon the Aspen. It is said to be called *Drebulle* in Lithuanian, a name which

seems to be intimately connected with our word "to tremble," which it actually means. The people explain the matter by saying that on one occasion when the trees bowed before Jesus the haughty Aspen refused, and has ever since trembled from the effects of the curse then pronounced against it. The accompanying lines are from the *Spirit of the Woods*:—

ELDER (*Sambucus nigra*).

a, spray of bloom; *b*, corolla; *c*, calyx with anthers; *d*, fruit; *e*, the same in section.

"Far off in highland wilds 'tis said
(But truth now laughs at fancy's lore),
That of this tree the cross was made
Which erst the Lord of glory bore,
And of that deed its leaves confess
E'er since a troubled consciousness."

There is a common Fungus, or kind of Toadstool, found growing on old Elder trees, and frequently known as Jew's Ear. Its size is frequently about an inch and a half in length by an inch in breadth, but varies considerably, and has the general appearance of an ear. The word is a corruption of Judas' Ear (*Auricula Judæ*), and was given to this parasite on account of the belief, once commonly entertained, that it was on the Elder tree that Judas hanged himself after betraying the Lord. Mandeville tells us that he actually saw the tree on which the deed

was performed, but does not say whether he saw any ears attached thereto. In some parts of England, until quite recent times, people were so superstitious that they would not bind up the wood of the Elder tree with any other kind. It is also believed that to burn Elder wood is to ensure misfortune. In former times a German peasant would not cut down an Elder tree entire, lest some calamity should befall him; and one of the greatest scholars that country has produced tells us that on one occasion he witnessed a peasant praying in front of an Elder tree, with folded hands and bare head, before venturing to wield the axe. Another writer tells us that he was once speaking to a number of English children about the danger of taking refuge under trees during a thunder-storm, and was told in reply by one of their number that all trees were not dangerous. "You will be quite safe under an Elder tree, because the cross was made of that, and so the lightning never strikes it." In reference to this question, Mr. Dyer says that a provincial paper recently made the following remark:—"This notion, that an Elder tree is safe from the effects of lightning, whether true or not, received confirmation a few days ago, when the electric fluid struck a thorn-bush in which an Elder had grown up and become intermixed, but which escaped perfectly unscathed, though the Thorn was completely destroyed." Another tradition affirms that the Cross was made of Mistletoe, which had up till that time been a large tree, but was condemned thereafter to the life of a parasite.

"Many plants displayed the true figure of the cross. It might be seen (as some imagined) in the centre of the red Poppy; and there was a 'Zucca' (a Fig or Gourd) at Rome, in the garden of the Cistercian convent of Santa Potentiana, the fruit of which, when cut through, showed a green cross inlaid on the white pulp, and having at its angles five seeds, representing the five wounds.

This mysterious Fig is described and figured by Bosio, who compares it to the 'Crocefisso de la cepa' at Valladolid, a representation of our Lord on the cross, formed naturally, though 'mirabilmente,' by the twisted growth of a Vine root. The Banana, in the Canaries, is never cut with a knife, because it also exhibits a representation of the Crucifixion, just as the Fern-root shows an Oak tree." I have known persons resident in China who invariably eat Bananas with a fork, lest they should, by cutting through the fruit, reveal the crucifix, which, strange to say, is very clearly represented there.

By Bede, Cypress, Cedar, Pine, and Box are mentioned as the four kinds of wood from which the cross was made; and St. Chrysostom, who names but three, refers to the words of Isaiah: "The glory of Lebanon" (*i.e.*, the Cedar) "shall come unto thee, the Fir-tree, the Pine-tree and the Box together, to beautify the place of My sanctuary." Many other conjectures have been made as to the particular tree whose wood furnished the material for the cross upon which Christ was nailed, though the tradition that most commonly prevailed among the monks was set forth nearly in the words of Bede. One poet has given the meaning of some Latin lines on the subject thus:—

> "Nailed were His feet to Cedar, to Palm His hands,
> Cypress His body bore, title on Olive stands."

The four kinds of wood were supposed to represent the four quarters of the globe, although their exact nature has been disputed. The gipsies believe the cross was made of Ash, whilst others maintain that it was entirely of Oak, and from yet another source we learn that it was made of Cedar only. The tree used for this purpose was cut down by Solomon, and buried on the spot afterwards known as the Pool of Bethesda. About the time of our Lord's Passion the wood floated, and was seized by

the Jews for making into the Cross. It was once believed in Scotland that the stunted growth of the Dwarf-birch arises from the branches of that tree having been employed in making the scourge with which the Saviour was beaten. The Willow is, however, by some believed to have been employed for this purpose, in consequence of which it has ever since drooped its boughs and wept. We are told that in some parts of England the Arum, commonly called Lords and Ladies, Cows and Calves, Parson in the Pulpit, or Parson and Clerk, is known as Gethsemane, because it is said to have been growing at the foot of the cross, and to have received on its leaves some drops of blood.

> "Those deep unwrought marks
> The villager will tell you
> Are the flower's portion from the atoning blood
> On Calvary shed. Beneath the cross it grew."

The same tradition clings to the Purple Orchis and the Spotted Persicaria. We have already seen how many plants are supposed to have gained their purple hue or ruddy colour from the blood of hero, god, or martyr. A similar legend seems to have been at one time attached to the purple-stained flowers of the Wood-sorrel, which is, by Italian painters, including Fra Angelico, occasionally placed in the foreground of their pictures representing the Crucifixion. This plant is called Alleluia in Italian, which may have had something to do, however, with its association with the Cross of Christ, "as if the very flowers round the cross were giving glory to God." The Wallflower that "scents the dewy air" is, in Palestine, called the "blood-drops of Christ," and its deep hue has led to its being called by a similar name in the West of England. The Rose-coloured Lotus, or Melilot, was said to have sprung in like manner from the blood of the lion slain by the Emperor Adrian. It is probable that the story was the modification of some earlier myth.

Mr. Conway tells us he has somewhere met with a legend telling that the thorn-crown of Christ was made from Rose-briar, and that the drops of blood that started under it and fell to the ground blossomed to Roses. Mrs. Howe, the American poetess, beautifully alludes to this in the lines—

> "Men saw the thorns on Jesus' brow,
> But angels saw the Roses."

Another flower which is traditionally associated with the Crucifixion is that called the Passion-flower. We are told by Johnson, who edited Gerarde's work, that the Spanish friars in America first called it "flower of the passion" (*flos passionis*), and, by adding what was wanting, made it an epitome of our Saviour's Passion. This is a very handsome climber, long since naturalized among ourselves, and regarded as one of the most graceful plants that can be employed for training upon walls and trellis work. In its native country its branches often clamber to the tops of the highest trees, where they sustain themselves by means of tendrils, and send out a succession of the most curious and beautiful flowers. The name was given by the superstitious in former times, who saw in the five anthers a resemblance to the five wounds received by Christ when nailed to the cross. In the triple style are seen the three nails employed; one for each of the hands, the other for the feet. In the central receptacle one can detect the pillar of the cross, and in the filaments is seen a representation of the crown of thorns on the head. The calyx was supposed to resemble the *nimbus*, or glory, with which the sacred head is regarded as being surrounded. The Anemone, from its blossoming at Easter, has received the name of Pasque-flower, and though there is no such tradition connected with it as that which is associated with the Passion-flower, so far as I am aware, yet it is interesting, as showing the influence of Christian festivals upon

the names of plants.[6] The Wild Clary, from its efficacy in purging the eyes, has gained the name of *Oculus Christi*, or Christ's-eye. There are also two plants called *Palma Christi:* the one (*Satyrion*), from the shape of its roots, the other (*Ricinus*), because its leaves bear some resemblance to the shape of the hand.

There is another old tradition respecting the Hawthorn, which, although it is only a legend, and bears no semblance of truth, is worth relating, as a specimen of the stories in which our forefathers believed, and which they used to repeat to each other and to their children as they sat warming themselves by their bright wood-fires during the winter evenings of the dark Middle Ages. It will already have been guessed that I refer to the tradition respecting the Glastonbury Thorn, which I remember having had pointed out to me some years ago when I was in Somerset. This tree is said to blossom every year on Christmas Day. The legend says that Joseph of Arimathæa once visited Glastonbury, and there preached the Gospel to the inhabitants, who had never heard the good news before. On his arrival he felt fatigued, as he had walked with feeble steps up a toilsome hill, which still bears the suggestive name of Weary-all-hill. Even my youthful legs felt the effects of the climb when I once walked with a friend to the summit of this hill. Here the good Joseph planted his Hawthorn staff firmly in the ground, where it at once took root, and grew into a flourishing tree, bearing buds and flowers even in the depth of winter. On this spot St. Joseph intended to build a Christian church for the use of those who had believed his message; but his purpose was frustrated, and the edifice was ultimately erected further inland. The original thorn produced by the growing staff has been destroyed; but younger trees have succeeded it, which it is pretended are descended from it, and possess the same virtues as the parent plant. Respecting this and similar superstitions, Sir Thomas Browne, in his "Vulgar Errors," tells us, "Strange

effects are naturally taken for miracles by weaker heads, and artificially improved to that apprehension by wiser. Certainly many precocious trees, and such as spring in the winter, may be found in England. Most trees sprout in the fall of the leaf, or autumn, and if not kept back by cold and outward causes, would leaf about the solstice (or say New Year). Now if it happen that any be so strongly constituted as to make this good against the power of winter, they may produce their leaves or blossoms at that season, and perform that in some singles, which is observable in whole kinds; as in ivy, which blossoms and bears at least twice a year, and once in the winter; as also in furze, which flowereth in that season."

There used to be a tradition to the effect that Adam and Eve made themselves clothes from the leaves of the Banyan tree. This tree is known by various names, as the Indian God tree or the Arched Fig tree. The Hindūs plant it near their temples, and in some places the tree itself serves for a temple, and receives the worship of the people. Milton speaks of this tree as the Indian Fig tree—not the kind renowned for fruit, but—

> "Such as at this day to Indians known,
> In Malabar or Deccan, spreads her arms,
> Branching so broad and long, that in the ground
> The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow
> About the mother tree, a pillar'd shade
> High over-arched, and echoing walks between."

Nothing can be more refreshing during the heat of the day in Eastern climes than to seek the shade of the Banyan tree, as every one who has lived in those tropical regions will testify; and it is scarcely matter of surprise or wonder that people who are always ready to make gods of anything which affords them pleasure, should have deified this famous tree.

Perhaps the name of the Asphodel may not be so familiar to some of my readers as most other plants about which we have written, but it has an interesting connection with our subject. The plant is a native of Sicily, and was employed by the ancients for funereal purposes. It was made to grow around the tombs, a belief prevailing that the manes or spirits of the departed were nourished by its roots. An inscription upon a very ancient tomb commences thus: "I am nourished by the Asphodel." This plant was supposed by the ancient poets to grow abundantly on the confines of the infernal regions. "I know why Mercury keeps us waiting so long! Down here with us there is nothing to be had but Asphodel, and libations, and oblations; and that in the midst of mist and darkness; but up in heaven it is all bright and clear, and plenty of Ambrosia there, and Nectar without stint." In the Middle Ages the root was highly esteemed as a food, and went by the name *cibo regio*, or "food for a king."

Even at the risk of repeating some few sentences, I cannot here refrain from quoting the very apt remarks of a recent writer, which have a direct bearing on this branch of our subject. In his work on "Primitive Manners and Customs," Mr. Farrer says (p. 290):—"The trees which occupy the most prominent place in European folk-lore are the Elder, the Thorn, and the Rowan or Mountain-Ash. In Denmark a twig of Elder placed silently in the ground is a popular cure for tooth-ache or ague, whilst no furniture, least of all a cradle, may be made of its wood; for the tree is protected by the Elder-mother, without whose consent not a leaf may be touched, and who would strangle the baby as it lay asleep. So also about Chemnitz, Elder-boughs fixed before stalls keep witchcraft from the cattle; and wreaths of it hung up in houses on Good Friday, after sunset, are believed to confer immunity from the ravages of caterpillars. In Suffolk it is the safest tree to stand under in a thunderstorm,

and misfortune will ensue if ever it is burned. The legend that the cross was made of its wood is evidently an after-growth, an attempt, of which we have so many examples, to give a Christian colour to a heathen practice; for the Elder was the tree under which, in pre-Christian times, the old Prussian Earth-god was fabled to dwell. Like the Elder, the Whitethorn was once an object of worship, for it, too, is held to be scathless in storms; and how else can we account for the fact that in Switzerland, as in the Eastern counties of England, to bring its flowers into a house is thought to bring death, than by supposing it was once a tree too sacred to be touched, and likely to avenge in some way the profanation that was done to it? Too deeply rooted in popular veneration for its sacred character to disappear, the Church, in course of time, wound its own legend round it, and by the fiction that its wood had composed the crown of thorns, deprived the worship of its heathen sting. But if round the Elder and the Thorn feelings of reverence once gathered and still linger, yet more it is true of the Rowan. In England, Germany, and Sweden, its leaves are still the most potent instrument against the darker powers: Highlanders still insert crosses of it with red thread in the lining of their clothes, and Cornish peasants still carry some in their pocket, and wind it round the horns of their cattle in order to keep off the Evil Eye. In Lancashire, sprigs of it are for the same reason hung up at bed-heads, and the churn-staff is generally made of its wood. It used to stand in nearly every churchyard in Wales, and crosses of it were regularly distributed on Christian festivals as sure preservatives against evil spirits. But this is another attempt to Christianize what was heathen, for the ancient Danes always used some of it for their ships, to secure them against storms, which Rân, the great Ocean-God's wife, with her net for capsized mariners, was ever ready and desirous to raise. The

Rowan in heathen mythology was called Thor's Helper, because it bent to his grasp in his passage over a flooded river on his way to the land of the Frost Giants; and it has been thought that the later sanctity of the tree may be due to the place it occupied in mythological fancy. Yet it seems more reasonable to trace the myth to a still older superstition, than to trace the superstition to the myth. For from the exceeding beauty of their berries the Rowan and the Elder and the Thorn would naturally impress the savage mind with the feelings of actual divinity, and would consequently lend themselves to the earliest imaginings about the universe of things. It is more likely that they progressed from a divinity on earth to their position in mythology, than from their position in mythology to a divinity on earth, for the mind is capable of employing things for worship long before it is capable of employing them for fable."

In Westphalia we meet with the curious tradition that the Wandering Jew can only rest where he shall find two Oaks growing in the form of a cross. No wonder he grows weary and haggard! Pliny tells us that two Myrtles stood before the temple of Quirinus, one called the Patrician, the other the Plebeian Myrtle. So long as the senate had pre-eminence, the former of these alone flourished; but when democracy got the upper hand, the Plebeian Myrtle grew rapidly, and the other withered away. "These Myrtles seem," says Mr. Conway, "to be but modifications of the two laurels which stood before the temple of the Roman Mars, and symbolized, as some think, the union of the Roman and Sabine peoples. When this alliance was established, after a bloody battle, the combatants are said to have purified themselves with Myrtle branches."

Gerarde records a curious belief, which it is said can be traced back to the time of Aristotle, who lived three or four hundred years before Christ. It is related that when bears were half-starved by

hybernating, and had lain in their dens for forty days without any nourishment, save such as they were supposed to obtain from the sucking of their paws, they were completely and suddenly restored by eating of the Arum. This would therefore appear to be one of the plants already spoken of as possessing the power of restoring life. In the story of "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves" we read how the rocks are rent, and admission gained to the treasures hidden within by means of the magic word "Sesame." Now this is the name of a well-known Eastern plant, whose seeds, as I have elsewhere related, were made into cakes. In Egypt the poorer people mixed the refuse of the seeds, after the oil had been expressed, with lemon juice or honey, and so used it as food; the name for this was Tahiné in Egypt, but Sesame in Greece. As the plant was well known to the Babylonians and other Oriental peoples, it would seem as though the tale in the "Arabian Nights" may have come from Persia, and that in the earliest form of the legend a flower was employed, as in the case of the Spring-wort, for gaining admission to the mountain treasures. Classic antiquity also has a rock-breaking plant, the Saxifrage, whose tender rootlets penetrate and dissolve the hardest stones with a force for which the ancients were unable to account.

SAXIFRAGE (*Saxifraga Aizoon*).
a, plant; *b*, leaf; *c*, blossom.

As the word Saxifrage literally means "stone-breaker," we shall find that the plant gained, in virtue of this, great notoriety as a medicine.

Legends respecting the Apple are very numerous. As there existed in far western seas the garden of the Hesperides or the Fortunate Isles, so we find in the traditions of our own land similar stories about Avalon. Now Avalon is the Isle of Apples. In the Hesperides Golden Apples grew, protected by nymphs. "Of all fruits, the Apple seems to have had the widest and most mystical history. The myths concerning it meet us in every age and country. Aphrodite bears it in her hand, as well as Eve. The serpent guards it; the dragon watches it. It is celebrated by Solomon; it is the healing fruit of Arabian tales. Ulysses longs for it in the gardens of Alcinous; Tantalus grasps vainly for it in Hades. In the *Prose Edda* it is written, 'Iduna keeps in a box, Apples, which the gods, when they feel old-age approaching, have only to taste to become young again. It is in this manner that they will be kept in renovated youth until Ragnarök'—the general destruction. Azrael, the Angel of death, accomplished his mission by holding it to his nostril; and in folk-lore, Snowdrop is tempted to her death by an Apple, half of which a crone has poisoned, but recovers life when the fruit falls from her lips. The Golden Bird seeks the Golden Apples of the King's Garden in many a Norse story; and when the tree bears no more, Frau Bertha reveals to her favourite that it is because a mouse gnaws at the tree's root. Indeed, the kind mother-goddess is sometimes personified as an Apple-tree. But oftener the Apple is the tempter in Northern mythology also, and sometimes makes the nose grow so that the pear alone can bring it again to moderate size." The Isle of the Blessed, of which we read in Keltic traditions, is the beautiful Avalon or Isle of Apples—

> "Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
> Nor ever wind blows loudly; but—lies

Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with *orchard lawns*
And bowerly hollows crown'd with summer sea."

Among other adornments of the Paradise which the Polynesian imagination has depicted we find the tabued Bread-fruit tree, and the *Ohia Hemolele* or Sacred Apple-tree. The priests of the olden time are said to have held that the forbidden fruits of these trees were in some manner connected with the trouble and death of the first man and woman—a legend which reminds us of the forbidden fruit of Eden. There was a legend widely spread among Teutonic nations, and known to us all in connection with William Tell, which related how an archer shot an Apple which was placed on the head of his own bright boy; and when asked why he had other arrows, replied that they were intended to shoot the despot in case the little boy had been wounded by the first.[6]

Closely connected with this tree is the Tree of Life. "How far the religious systems of the great nations of antiquity were affected by the record of the Creation and Fall preserved in the opening chapters of Genesis, it is not perhaps possible to determine. There are certain points of resemblance which are at least remarkable, but which we may assign, if we please, either to independent tradition, or to a natural development of the earliest or primeval period. The Trees of Life and of Knowledge are at once suggested by the mysterious sacred tree which appears in the most ancient sculptures and paintings of Egypt and Assyria, and in those of the remoter East. In the symbolism of these nations the sacred tree sometimes figures as a type of the universe, and represents the whole system of created things, but more frequently as a tree of life, by whose fruit the votaries of the gods (and, in some cases, the gods themselves) are nourished with divine strength, and are prepared for the joys of immortality. The most ancient types of this mystical Tree of Life are the Date-palm, the Fig, and the Pine, or Cedar." The Palm seems to be the

tree most early represented, the dates which grow thereon being early regarded as fit food for the manes or spirits of the departed. In India there is the sacred Bó-tree, a kind of Fig (*Ficus religiosa*), about which volumes have been written, and other trees of great notoriety. Nor should we forget to mention the legends respecting the Ambrosia of the gods, the sacred Soma or Homa plant, concerning which more will be said in our work on Foreign Flower-lore. It is sufficient here to remark that a sacred bough or plant is introduced into all the ancient mysteries; such as the Indian Lotus, the Rose-tree of Isis, the Fig-tree of Atys, the Myrtle of Venus, the Mistletoe of the Druids, and many others of a similar kind.

The Violet was a classical plant, and is frequently mentioned by such poets as Homer and Virgil. Shakspere alludes to the old tradition which said that this flower was raised from the body of Io by the agency of Diana.

> "Lay her i' the earth,
> And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
> May violets spring."

Ion, the Greek name for this flower, is said to have been given it because Io fed on Violets, when she was transformed by Jupiter into a heifer; others say it was so called after some nymphs of Ionia, who first presented these flowers to the father of the gods. The Adonis-flower owes its name, and some say its existence also, to the favourite of Venus. It is said that he, when dying, spilt some blood upon the earth, from which the flower sprung. There may be some confusion, however, with the Anemone, concerning which we find a similar tradition. Bion and others tell us that tears and blood were blended in the production of this latter flower, the blood of Adonis being mixed with the tears which Venus shed at his death. Ovid describes Venus lamenting over

the bleeding body of her lover, whose memory and her own grief she resolves to perpetuate by changing his blood into a flower.

> "But be thy blood a flower. Had Proserpine
> The power to change a nymph to mint?—Is mine
> Inferior? Or will any envy me
> For such a change? . . .
> From thence a flower, alike in colour, rose,
> Such as those trees produce, whose fruits enclose
> Within the limber rind their purple grains."

Similar traditions cluster around the Hyacinth and a multitude of other flowers to which we cannot here refer. In a later chapter will be found some further legends and tales of a similar kind.

The tradition respecting the origin of the Geranium may fitly bring this chapter to a close. The prophet Mohammed having one day washed his shirt, he threw it upon a plant of the Mallow for the purpose of drying. When the shirt was taken away, the Mallow was found to have been transformed by contact with such a sacred garment into a magnificent Geranium, a plant which then for the first time came into existence. This interesting story is told by Sir G. Temple in his "Excursions in the Mediterranean," whence it has been copied by more than one later writer.

THISTLE (*Carduus acanthoides*).
a, plant; *b*, single blossom; *c*, seed.

CHAPTER VII.

PROVERBS OF FLOWERS AND PLANTS.

IT was to be supposed that where we find flowers and plants exercising such an influence upon the popular customs and superstitions of a people, the sayings of that people would also be influenced to a similar extent. In studying the proverbs connected with our common flowers, plants, and trees, we find that they refer to a great variety of subjects—such, for example, as the health-giving properties they are supposed to possess; the influence they

have on people and things; the relation they bear to the seasons and weather; and many others. Thus, in reference to the benefits which may be derived from the use of certain plants and fruits, we may note such sayings as the following. Aubrey, who wrote just two hundred years ago, says that the people of the West of England had a proverb which ran thus:—

> "Eate Leekes in Lide, and Ramsins in May,
> And all the yeare after Physitians may play."

Here we are brought face to face with a number of facts which will help us to realize how valuable these old proverbs may often prove. In the first place it will be asked what period of the year is meant by Lide, and the answer which is given by Aubrey himself is confirmed in a variety of ways. Lide is the month of March, and means the Loud or Roaring month, because it is at that time we generally hear the rough, howling wind.[1] There is an old saying bearing on this point from which we learn that in March, and at all seasons of the year when the judges are on circuit and there are criminals to be hanged, storms prevail. In the Blackmoor tin district you may still hear the old-fashioned folk speak of the first Friday in March as "Friday in Lide"; the same being observed as a festival by the tinners. There is a saying in Luxulgan that "ducks will not lay till they have drunk Lide water." So we see that though some two hundred years have passed since Aubrey wrote his book, and noted the West-country proverb, the old name for Lide still lives on in that same district. Nor is this all, for the word Ramsin might be a puzzle, until one came into the counties of Devon and Cornwall, when it would not be long before one found that this old name was still alive and in constant use. It is the name by which the people speak of Wild Garlic, an offensive plant which smells very much like

crushed Onions, but grows very plentifully in the woods and fields of the western counties. And yet one other fact is suggested by the old proverb already quoted, and that is, that when once an old rhyme has taken firm root, it throws off a number of offshoots which soon spring up and become strong plants by themselves. I mean by this that you will often find proverbs and rhymes which differ in reference to their subjects, while their application is the same. To illustrate this let me take you again into Devonshire, and there, where two hundred years ago physicians were supposed to have all their work taken away when people eat Leeks and Onions, you will still hear the following rhyme:—

"Eat an apple going to bed,
Make the doctor beg his bread;"

or,

"Eat an apple going to bed,
Knock the doctor on the head."

The second line is given differently in different localities, and the whole proverb often has a much more rustic ring, but the sense is given in the forms I have recorded. In some parts of Devon they add that the apple should be roasted, and in old houses the custom of eating fruit for supper or after supper still exists, as I found during the winter of 1881-2, when staying on the borders of Dartmoor.[2] In reference to Ramsins, however, it must be noted that it once applied to an edible plant, unless we suppose that our ancestors could relish such an offensive taste and smell as that of the Wild Garlic, which is now called Ramsin or Ramsey. The virtue of certain plants is the subject of proverbs in other lands than ours. Among the Italians of the seventeenth century the Foxglove was freely used to heal fresh wounds and cleanse old ones, whence the adage—

"Aralda, tutte piaghe salda"—

"The Aralda, or Foxglove, is a balm for every wound," as we may freely translate it.

The contaminating influences of bad manners is very aptly set forth by the Dutch and Spanish proverb: "The rotten Apple spoils its companion." On the other hand, what a lesson of comfort may be learned by the humblest worker when he is assured that "En petit champ croit bien bon blé," or "In the little field very good corn may be grown." One does not need to be rich or great to perform a noble action, or speak a kindly word. But it must not be supposed that one good deed will make a man noble, or that he has done all when he has spoken a cheerful word, for, as the Italian again says, "Una Spina non fa siepe"; *i.e.*, "One Thorn-bush does not make a hedge," any more than one grain fills the measure. Very instructive is the old Danish proverb with its telling pun, which says "The herb Patience (*Taalmodigheds Urt*) grows not in every man's garden." Not less true is the saying of the Italians that "Willows are weak; yet they serve to bind stronger wood." As everything is not gold that glitters, and it is not everything that has a good core because it has a fair outside, so "Nicht alle Blumen taugen zum Sträusschen," as the German says; or to put it into English, "Not every flower is fit for the nosegay." Fair promises do not always end as we had a right to expect, for promises break as do pie-crusts, and the lover of flowers expresses the idea in his own way when he says with the Dutch "Bloemen zijn geen Vruchten," or "Blossoms are not fruits." One must therefore beware of false appearances, and trust only to the ripened fruit when it comes in due season.

Many are the proverbs which connect plants and fruit with future good or evil, as, for instance, that which we find in my native county of Kent, where they say that if you dream of fruit out of season it is a sign of ill-luck.

"Fruit out of season,
Sorrow out of reason,"

say the old folk of Sussex; and the same notion is found from Land's End to John o' Groats. In Scotland, for example, to dream of fruit, or any sort of crop during its proper season, denoted good luck, but to dream of such things out of season is supposed to be a sure indication of bad fortune. Equally universal is the belief that a plentiful crop of wild berries indicates a severe winter. This the Scotch account for by saying that it is the provision which God is making for the birds in prospect of their coming need. In Cornwall they have a proverb as follows:—

"Many Slones, many groans."

A gentleman once explained to me that this referred to their indigestible character, because if eaten by the "many," they produce severe gripings and groans. However true it may be that Sloes (or "Slones" as the Devonshire and Cornish folk call the fruit of the Blackthorn) are indigestible, the proverb has a deeper and sadder application than this. It was invented to attest to the common belief that a hard winter was indicated, when people would have to groan over their poverty, and perhaps over the death of those they loved. And this idea is further supported by another proverb, still in use in Devon, which says:—

"Many Nits, many pits."

The "pits" referred to are the graves of those who shall die as the result of the hard weather indicated by the abundance of "nits" or nuts. On the contrary, we find that in Scotland when the Broom or Furze bushes are full of blossom, it is regarded as an indication of good crops during the ensuing season, while an abundance of blossom on Turnips running to seed indicates the

same thing. It thus appears that while some [illegible] are omens of good, others are to be regarded under certain circumstances as indicative of evil. The same superstition will account for the old proverb which I heard a Devonshire farmer repeat during the mild Christmas-tide of 1881-2, and which, in slightly varying form is to be heard all over England—

"A green Christmas makes a fat churchyard."

In Yorkshire they say that when Acorns are plentiful it may be regarded as a sign that bacon will be bad. Probably there will be some connection here between the use of acorns as food for pigs, and the result of the same on their flesh. In an interesting work called "Sussex Stories," the first chapter opens by appealing to the quantity of Hips and Haws and other wild fruit which abounded in the hedges, as a strong proof, according to popular belief, of a coming hard winter. Thus we find that the superstition is very widespread. I call it a superstition, for, while the summer of 1880 brought only a moderate crop of berries, the winter was one of the severest known for many years. On the contrary the Sloes and other wild fruits, nuts and *Mast* (Acorns and fruit of Beech-trees), were so plentiful in Devonshire and elsewhere in 1881 as to be the topic of special remark, yet scarcely a flake of snow fell until they had all disappeared, and the winter was exceptionally mild. A writer already referred to remarks that it is an old country saying, "A great rime [frost] year, a good fruit year."

In other ways plants are supposed to be connected with the weal and woe of the people. Thus an old proverb says:—

"Sowing Fennel is sowing sorrow."

This belief was carried over from England to America by the early emigrants, and while it still lives on in New England we find curious proofs that the same superstition exists to-day among

ourselves. Quite recently, as we learn from the "Folk-lore Record," a gentleman living near Southampton told his gardener to sow some Parsley seed. The man, however, refused, saying that it would be a bad day's work to him if ever he brought Parsley seed to the house. He said that he would not mind bringing a plant or two, and throwing them down, that his master might pick them up if he chose, but he would not bring them to him for anything. It was certainly a concession on the part of the gardener even to offer to bring some plants for his master's use, seeing that it is quite as unlucky to move Parsley as to sow it. In Devonshire some three or four years ago it was stated that the clerk of a certain parish had been bedridden ever since the Parsley-mores (roots) were moved—a solemn warning to all never to interfere with the plant again! In the neighbourhood of Morwenstow, in the same county, a poor woman attributed a sort of stroke which had affected one of her children after whooping cough, to the moving of the Parsley bed.[2] "Parsley fried will bring a man to his saddle, and a woman to her grave," says the adage; upon which one has remarked, "I know not the reason of this proverb. Parsley was wont to be esteemed a very wholesome herb, however prepared; only by the ancients it was forbidden them that had the falling sickness; and modern experience hath found it to be bad for the eyes" (Ray's "Proverbs;" Bohn's edition, p. 30).

Proverbs connected with flowers and fruit often have some relation to their quality, colour, or nature. In Devonshire the Sloe is frequently used to set forth the blackness of a thing, as of a bruise or other dark object, and—

"So black 's a Sloe"

has become a regular proverb. (Other proverbs relating to this fruit are given in the "Plant Lore of Shakspere.") This

is certainly not so objectionable a phrase as that which found currency in Sussex in my younger days. The people used to say that the devil came and pulled down the branches of the nut-bushes for those who went a-nutting on Sunday, and that was consequently the best time for gathering them; and so thoroughly has the Evil One come to be associated with nut-gathering, that the people say of a thing that it is—

"As black as the devul's nuttin'-beg."

The "nuttin'-beg" is either an ordinary bag such as is used for other purposes, or more commonly the smock-frock fastened tightly around the waist with a girdle, and drawn up so as to bulge out and receive the nuts through an opening in front. In this way both men and women, youths and maidens, may often still be seen in remote country districts, especially in the neighbourhood of the Kent and Sussex hop-gardens, gathering nuts and storing them away, husk and all, for use when they have become mellow and ripe.

Referring again to the colours of plants,—

"As white as a Lily"

has long since passed into a proverb. Another proverb formed on the same lines, but less familiar in most places to-day is—

"As blake as a Paigle"—

which means "As yellow as a Cowslip." "As bitter as Aloes" is another of these common sayings. The Rose naturally enough comes in for a good share of attention, and from the proverbial use of the word, we learn that formerly Roses of a red colour were both the commonest and the most highly prized. Among the Greeks we find many expressions which prove this. Red cheeks, or as we should call them Rosy-cheeks, were called Rose-apples,

and Homer has a most poetical expression for the morning, which he calls Rosy-fingered, an idea which our own Milton has taken up more than once in his "Paradise Lost." In the Sixth Book he speaks of the dreadless angel holding sway—

"Till Morn,
Wak't by the circling hours, with rosy hand
Unbarr'd the gates of Light."

In the opening lines of the Fifth Book we read—

"Now Morn her rosy steps in th' eastern clime
Advancing sow'd the earth with orient pearl."

In Devonshire a blooming lass is said to look like a Double-Rose, and in the Swedish "Frithiof's Saga" we have the following, among other, instances of the way in which the Rose has come to be regarded as proverbial for what is blooming and gay—

"He stands between the brothers there—
As though the ripe day stood
Atween young morning rosy-fair,
And night within the wood."

WILD ROSE (*Rosa canina*).

a, spray of blossom; *b*, section of blossom; *c*, seed; *d*, section of same.

In another place the colours of the Rose and Lily are contrasted :—

"Yes! there I'd crown with stars far-glancing
Thy brow and locks of waving light:

In Vingolf's Hall I'd lead the dancing,
Till Rose-red blush'd my Lily white!"

The nobility of these flowers has also become proverbial.[8] Linnæus speaks of the Lily tribe as "Nobles (or Patricians) of the vegetable kingdom;" and Pliny remarks *Lilium nobilitate proximum est*—"The Lily is next in nobility to the Rose." In France, where the Lily was largely employed as an emblem, it was but natural that it should be regarded as the King of Flowers, but even there the Rose is queen.

"Noble fils du soleil, le Lys majesteux.
Vers l'astre paternal dont il brave les feux
Elève avec orgueil sa tête souveraine;
Il est roi des fleurs, la Rose est la reine."

There is one proverb connected with the Rose which must not be passed over unnoticed, though it is a short one; *i.e.*, *Sub rosa*—"Under the Rose." An old writer remarks that when we desire to confine our words, or have them regarded as a secret or confidential communication, we commonly say they are spoken "under the Rose," whence the proverb—

"Under the Rose be it spoken."

The explanation usually offered is as follows. The Rose was sacred to Venus, the Goddess of Love, and was consecrated by Cupid to Harpocrates, the God of Silence, to bribe him not to betray the amorous doings of the goddess. Hence the flower became the emblem of silence. In Germany it was customary of old to place the figure of a Rose in the ceiling of the banquet hall, as a reminder to the guests that the conversation there carried on should not be repeated elsewhere. The Rose was consequently adopted by the Jacobins as an emblem of the Pretender, because his adherents could only render him assistance *sub rosa*. In "The Language of Flowers" we read: "The

White Rose has ever been considered as sacred to Silence." "*Sub rosa*," said the Roman, and the pledge was deemed sacred. This attribute of the White Rose was, we have read, gained by the fact that a Rose was carved in the centre of the refectory or dining-room of the ancients, and that as all things spoken in the freedom of social intercourse were esteemed sacred, so "under the Rose" became a proverbial saying for secrecy. In the "Bible Herbal," an old work published at the close of the sixteenth century, while Shakspere was still living, we find this "Emblem" with the motto:—

> "He who doth secrets reveal,
> Beneath my roof shall never live."

Roses are ever esteemed emblems of love, and queens of the floral world. The Greeks dedicated them to the rosy-fingered goddess Aurora. The Romans were passionately fond of them. Cicero reproached Verres with the extravagant luxury of making the tour of Sicily in a bower of Roses, himself decked and garlanded with these flowers. In 1526 the Rose was appropriately placed over confessionals, to indicate that here, also, the strictest privacy should be observed. "Poetry is lavish of Roses: it heaps them into beds, weaves them into crowns, twines them into arbours, forges them into chains, adorns with them the goblet used in the festivals of Bacchus, plants them in the bosom of beauty. It not only delights to bring in the Rose itself upon every occasion, but seizes each particular beauty it possesses as an object of comparison with the loveliest works of nature." Hence we get such proverbs and sayings as these—"As soft as a Rose leaf"; "As sweet as a Rose"; "Rosy-clouds"; "Roseate hue"; "He looks through Rose-coloured glasses"; "Rosy-lips"; "Rosy-blushes"; "Rosy-dawns"; and so on. Thus writes one of our ablest authors at the beginning of the present century, fully

endorsing what we had already penned before we read these remarks. How expressive is the simple saying that "Roses have thorns," and whose experience does not confirm the truth of the words? In looking through Bohn's valuable "Polyglot of Foreign Proverbs," one cannot fail to be struck with the fact that everywhere the Rose comes in for the lion's share of attention. The proverb last quoted appears in Italian thus: "Ogni Rosa ha la sua spina," or "Anco tra le spine nascono le Rose." The German and Dutch proverbs are also expressive. Roses come in again in another old saw, which has reference to a superstition referred to above. "When Roses and Violets flourish in autumn, it is an evil sign of plague or pestilence during the coming year," said our wise ancestors. This saying no doubt had its origin in the simple fact that a mild and damp winter, which produces grass and flowers, is less healthy than a colder season. This, too, accounts for the kindred phrase—

"A green yule makes a fat kirkyard;"

and both of these sayings are still quoted by country people, who think that spring flowers blossoming in autumn portend death.[4] In Surrey they say "It is always cold when the Blackthorn comes into flower," and in Kent they speak of a "Blackthorn winter."

Sometimes we find reference to the value of a thing in flower proverbs. Who has not plucked the sweet spikes of Lavender and laid them with the linen in the wardrobe? From this custom arises the saying, which used to be common in Sussex in my boyhood, when any one wished to pass a joke on another for his great carefulness of a thing—

"Do it up in Lavender!"

For a thing which was done up with Lavender would be regarded as choice and precious.[5] In Devonshire the Saffron is used as

a figure for anything costly. Mr. Ellworthy tells us that a farmer living near Exeter said to him a year or two ago in reference to a certain farm—"'Tis a very purty little place; he'd let so dear as Saffron." The Saffron used to be regarded as a valuable remedy for consumption, and was believed to be able to restore persons so afflicted, and bring them back from death's door, as Gerarde says; in consequence of which it was regarded as of very great worth. More than one proverb attaches itself to the Cresses. Perhaps some of my readers have, like myself, heard the proverb—

SAFFRON.

"He id'n wuth a curse" (or, locally, "a cuss"),

and have been shocked at its vulgarity. But it often happens that these apparently vulgar sayings had their origin in something that was noble and expressive, but that through corruption in language the meaning has been obscured and applied in quite a different way from that which was originally intended. It was so with the proverb in question, for the word "curse" is really nothing more nor less than "Kers" or "Cress," it being a common thing in many places to transpose the letters when

they come together like this. People say "gars" for "grass," "urn" for "run"; and the other day I heard a man speak about the "strawmy weather," when he wished to say it was very "stormy." In Chaucer, Cress is called Kers, and he employs the word to denote anything worthless :—

"Of paramours ne raught he not a kers."

We cannot therefore doubt that the common saying about not caring a curse for a thing, or it isn't worth a curse, originated in this way. The name which was long ago given to the Cresses was Nasturtium, which people now generally abbreviate into Stertion. This word means "the nose-twitcher," and was given to the various kinds of Cress on account of their sharp, biting qualities. Pliny says that certain kinds would put the nose into convulsions. The refreshing nature of these plants as food was recognized long ago, as we may learn from the fact that the Greeks had a proverb which taught men to—

"Eat Cress to learn more wit."

A gentleman who recently came from a part of the country where Gorse or Furze does not grow remarked with surprise the fact that the Devonshire hills were covered with the golden blossoms. He was not aware that the shrub blossomed at any other season than in spring. Evidently he had not learned the old proverb, still in use in Northamptonshire, which says—

"When Gorse is out of bloom kissing is out of season";

for had he done so he might have inferred that the flowers may be found at Christmas as well as at Ladyday or Midsummer.

In some parts of England Camomiles grow wild, but the old-fashioned gardens were imperfect without a bed of these flowers, which were employed during the winter for making into tea for

various complaints. The plant spreads rapidly, whence we have the comparison—

"Like a Camomile bed,
The more it is trodden,
The more it will spread."

Falstaff in *Henry IV.* says, "Though the Camomile the more it is trodden on the faster it grows, yet youth the more it is wasted the sooner it wears." Here we must compare the old saying respecting another equally popular flower—

"Where Rosemary flourishes the lady rules."

In earlier times the people grew this plant largely in their cottage gardens, and it came to be regarded as a proof of the strong influence of the matron who held sway within. Perhaps this idea was not popular—anyhow some people say that it was on its account that the Rosemary began to lose its ground as an ornament for the parterre.

I was recently visiting the little town of Moretonhampstead, situated, as its name indicates, on the borders of Dartmoor. Respecting this place, it is said that a few years ago there existed the following custom among the families of yeomen and farmers, and probably among the peasantry as well, as I have found in other places in the neighbourhood. The second Sunday after her marriage, the bride would visit her mother, and go to church with the members of her own family. The history of this custom is interesting, as it leads us back to very ancient times and Eastern customs, but we are here only concerned with the fact itself. This Sunday was consequently known as Mothering Sunday. Now in many places in England the Sunday in mid-Lent went by this name, and was observed as a great holiday. Young people in service used to be allowed to go home to see their friends on that day, and it was customary

for those who could do so to present their mothers with a cake, called the Simnel, or Mothering-cake. At this season of the year the fresh Violets would be in flower, and as the young people returned to their homes, nothing was more appropriate than that they should gather a posy of the fragrant blossoms to carry with them to their friends. This custom has given rise to the curious saying—

"Go a-mothering, and find Violets in the lane."

There are many proverbs which have an agricultural bearing; to these we must briefly call attention. Good old Thomas Fuller has among his works a paragraph on "God speed the Plough," in which he tells us in his quaint way: "I saw in seed time a husbandman at plough in a very rainy day. Asking him the reason why he should not rather leave off than labour in such foul weather, his answer was returned me in their country rhythm:—

"'Sow Beans in the mud,
And they'll come up like a wood.'

This could not but remind me of David's expression, 'They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him' (Psalm cxxvi. 5, 6)." I also am reminded of the Chinese custom of sowing rice in the mud, that it may come up like a wood, and perhaps allusion is made to the same custom in the passage which teaches us to "Cast our bread upon the waters, and we shall find it after many days." One, writing about the middle of the last century, says that sowing Beans "is usually done at Candlemas [or February 2nd], according to the rhyming proverb—

"'At Candlemas Day
It's time to sow Beans in the clay.'"

A number of other proverbs rightly belong here. "Sow Beans in Candlemas waddle" is but another version of that last quoted. Another says "Sow Wheat in dirt, and Rye in dust." The Spanish proverb advises us to "Sow Corn in clay, and plant Vines in sand."[6]

It was recently remarked that a curious superstition still found currency among many gardeners in the neighbourhood of Warrington. One old man stated that the 7th of May was for some reason or other specially adapted for the planting of French Beans. He was himself a firm believer in the tradition, and further stated that the same opinion was entertained by many others, who regarded that day as one of unusually good omen. Such curious remnants of bygone days strongly remind us of the very same superstitions held by the people of China and many other countries.

We meet with many proverbs connecting plants with the weather. The Kentish saying—

"Oak, smoke; Ash, squash,"

is explained more fully in the following lines :—

"If the Oak is out before the Ash,
'Twill be a summer of wet and splash;
But if the Ash is before the Oak,
'Twill be a summer of fire and smoke."

There is another rhyming proverb which refers to the Ash—

"Burn Ash-wood green,
'Tis fire for a queen;
Burn Ash-wood sear,
'Twill make a man swear."

This arises from the fact, as the country folk a hundred years ago asserted, that "the lop of Ash, when green, burns the best of any" kind of wood.[7] Here is another rhyme—

"When Elm leaves are as big as a shilling,
Plant Kidney Beans, if to plant 'em you're willing.
When Elm leaves are as big as a penny,
You must plant Kidney Beans, if you mean to have any.
When the Elmen leaf is as big as a mouse's ear,
Then to sow Barley never fear;
When the Elmen leaf is as big as an ox's eye,
Then say, 'Hie! boys! Hie!'"

Aubrey gives us the following "proverb for Apples, Peares, Hawthorns, Quicksetts, Oakes":—

"Sett them at All-hallow-tyde, and command them to grow:
Sett them at Candlemas, and entreat them to grow."

Mr. Britten has culled some curious sayings about plants from Ellis's "Modern Husbandman," among which we find the following:—If a Beech-tree is fell'd about Midsummer the wood of it will last three times longer than that felled in winter. "Beech in summer and Oak in winter" has now become a common saying. The Beech, by its large bud, discovers to the countryman about Christmas that there will be a probability of a moist season the succeeding summer. They say that if a drop of rain or dew will hang on an Oat at Midsummer there may be a good crop. Vetches are a most hardy grain, according to the comparison of an old saying—

"A Thetch will go through
The bottom of an old shoe."

Every locality will have its peculiar proverbs. Thus in Cornwall the people do not speak of turning over a new leaf, but say, "He has begun a new rish" (rush), from which it would appear that reference is made to the old custom of stringing counters or tallies on a rush for keeping an account. In the neighbourhood of Plymouth, and perhaps elsewhere, they say when a fair damsel has given her lover the cold shoulder—

"She has given him Turnips.'

This reminds me that in Sussex it is said of a person who looks very pale, "You must have cut a Turnip, and rubbed the blood over your cheeks." This curious saying was repeated in my hearing in reference to the wan cheeks of my wife, when we landed at St. Leonards, after having lived for some years in China, where we both lost all our blush and colour. I have spoken of Plymouth, which reminds me that when I was there recently I noticed a broom tied to the top of the mast of a vessel lying in the dock. It is customary thus to advertise a vessel which is in search of a new owner, and this fact will probably account for the Dutch proverb, "Zij steekt den bezem uit," which, while it is literally translated "She hangs the bezom out," has also the metaphorical interpretation, "She is in search of a husband." (See Brewer's "Dictionary of Phrase and Fable.")

We are all familiar with the phrase—

"Nemo me impune lacessit"—

or, "No one shall provoke me with impunity." This motto accompanies the Thistle in the Scotch Arms, and refers to the rough, prickly nature of the plant, and the tradition respecting the discovery of the Danish plot by a soldier's foot having been lacerated through treading on an unseen Thistle. I have referred to this tradition elsewhere, but may here take the opportunity of referring to Dr. Cooke's interesting work on "Freaks and Marvels of Plant Life," in which attention is drawn to this Scottish emblem and motto. He says (p. 452 *seq.*): "The Scotch emblem, the Thistle, has been the subject of much controversy, both as to its origin and the particular species which is symbolical. The tradition has been often cited which carries its origin back to the time of the Danish invasion. Sir Harry Nicholas traces the badge to James III., for, in an inventory of his jewels, Thistles are mentioned as part of his ornaments.

"According to Pinkerton, the first authentic mention of the Thistle as the badge of Scotland is in Dunbar's poem entitled 'The Thrissell and the Rois,' written in 1503, on the occasion of the marriage of James IV. with Margaret Tudor. Hamilton of Bargowe expressly states that the plant was the 'Monarch's choice'; and Sir D. Lindsey, in 1537, mentions it as the emblem of James V." The question has been raised, What is the true Scotch Thistle? and it has even been contested by some that the true Thistle bore no spines. Certainly the motto quoted above would lead us to the opinion that the Thistle was thus armed, and herein we may see the service proverbs may sometimes render to history. The whole question has been investigated by Dr. Johnston, who was led "to seek a solution by an examination of the figures impressed on the money of the Kings of Scotland. 'Now, the first who so marked the money was James V., and on the coins of his reign (1514—1542) the head or flower only is represented. On a coin of James VI., of 1599, there are three Thistles grouped and united at the base, whence two leaves spread laterally, and the stalk of the plant is spinous. On later coins, as on one of 1602, there is only a single head, while the leaves and spines are retained, and this figure is the same given on all subsequent coins, the form of the flower itself having suffered no change from its first adoption. This evidence, says Johnston, seems to me to put *Carduus nutans* (or the Musk Thistle) out of court, and the greater number of species, and very much to invalidate the claims of the *Onopordum* (or Cotton Thistle), but greatly to strengthen our belief that the *Carduus Marianus* (the Blessed Thistle or Lady's Thistle, as it is generally called) was the chosen emblem of the national pride and character, although it must be admitted that the resemblance between the plant and the picture of the artist is somewhat postulatory. The bold motto, "Nemo me impune lacessit," was the addition of James VI., and

Carduus Marianus is almost the only species that would naturally suggest it, or that really deserves it.'" The quotation is from Dr. Johnston's "Botany of the Eastern Borders," p. 131; and Dr. Cooke gives us (p. 455) a beautiful specimen of a Scotch coin of 1599 bearing the three flowers and the motto of which we have been speaking.[8]

There is another old proverbial saying which is supposed to have had its origin in connection with an historical event; I allude to the phrase—

"Cleave to the crown though it hang in a bush."

The tradition connected with it runs as follows, and is generally given on the authority of Miss Strickland. It is said that when Richard III. was slain on Redmore Heath or Bosworth Field, he was plundered of his armour and ornaments, among which was a small crown of gold which was worn as a crest on his helmet, and which was hidden by a soldier in a Hawthorn bush. It was afterwards found and carried back to Lord Stanley, who placed it on the head of his son-in-law, the first royal Tudor, whom he saluted as Henry VII. It is said that it was in memory of this event that the house of Tudor assumed as a device a crown in a bush of fruited Hawthorn, and hence arose the proverb already quoted.[9]

We are probably all familiar with the saying "Grasp your Nettle!" and every one knows what it means. When I was a boy, it was considered to be a fine joke to get a young schoolfellow, who was not yet initiated into the mystery of things, to grasp a Stinging Nettle by telling him that "Sting-nettles don't sting this month." If the unlucky youth touched the Nettle, and drew back his hand with a sudden consciousness that *he* had been stung, the ready explanation was, "We did not say the Nettle would not sting *you*—we said it would not sting *this*

month." If one can only summon courage enough to seize the Nettle-leaf firmly, and squeeze it hard between the fingers, it gives no pain, the spikes being crushed and broken without piercing the skin. Hence the saying we have already quoted.

How many people alarm themselves about something that

STINGING NETTLE (*Urtica dioica*).

a, plant with anthers; *b*, plant with stamens; *c*, pistils; *d*, seed; *e*, ovary.

they think is going to happen, and make themselves miserable before the time; when after all the expected trial never comes, or comes in some new form by means of which it is shorn of all its terror and sting! There used to be a somewhat vulgar saying about the Jews, to the effect that their persons naturally

[illegible] very unpleasant odour. Persons who have lived in the [illegible] are aware that it is almost impossible to meet a man who is not thus obnoxive, but no one would think of finding the reason of this in some resemblance between their name and a plant that grew somewhere in the country. Yet we find from the following extract that Jews and Jews' Ears (a Fungus) were supposed to have some connection in their smelling qualities. The *Judas Tree*, or *Judasbaum*, was believed to be the tree on which Judas hung himself. Another tradition, however, related that it was on the Elder; and Maundevile says, p. 112, that between Jerusalem and the valley of Jehoshaphat "is zit the *tree of Eldre*, that Judas henge himself upon." Hence the fungus on Elder-trees, which has some sort of resemblance to the human ear, was called *auricula Judæ*, Judas-Ohr, Judas-Ear, or by contraction *Jew's Ear*. This Bacon describes ("Natural History," § 554) as "an herb that groweth upon the roots and lower parts of the bodies of trees; especially of Elders, and sometimes Ashes. It hath a strange propertie: for in warm weather it swelleth and openeth extremely. It is not green, but of a duskie brown colour. And it is used for squinancies and inflamations in the throat: whereby it seemeth to have a mollifying and lenifying vertue." It is mentioned along with other fungi in the "Lancashire Witches": "All the sallets are turn'd to Jewes-Ears, Mushrooms, and Puck-fists." Brand ("Popular Antiquities," II., 587: Ellis' Edition, III., 283) quotes the following question from a selection of philosophical problems: "Why are Jews said to stink naturally? Is it because the *Jew's-Ears* grow on *stinking Elder*, which tree that fox-headed Judas was falsely supposed to have hanged himself on; and so that natural stink has been entailed on them, and their posterities, as it were *ex traduce?*" We have quoted the foregoing from Archdeacon Hare's "Fragments of Two Essays

on Philology," as much because of its general bearing on plant-lore, as its immediate relation to proverbial expressions connected with plants. The essay is strongly to be recommended for its interesting collection of curious and out-of-the-way matters relating to plants and flowers as well as other subjects.

I have already incidentally touched upon a few proverbs from Continental and other sources, and may perhaps here be permitted once more to refer to the same branch of study. "In Oriental countries" (says Dr. Cooke) "flowers have a deeper meaning, and a more emphatic language than with us. Imagination may run riot in Persia and India, but the love of flowers is beautifully exemplified among these people." I have already in course of preparation a work on Oriental Plant-Lore, the result of some years of careful personal investigation and study in the East, and shall not therefore trespass on the ground there occupied further than to illustrate the truth of the words I have quoted. Many Eastern proverbs are very rythmical, and lose half their beauty by being transplanted into other soil. The following from the Celestial Empire is intended to teach us that "every dog has his day," if he will only wait till his turn comes; and by giving it in a transliterated form the reader will be able to judge to some extent of its original beauty.

"T'ao hua êrh yueh k'ai,
Chü hua chiu yueh k'ai;
Ko tzu têng shih lai;"

which might be put somehow thus:—

"In the second month the Peach-tree blooms,
But not till the ninth the Chrysanthemums:
So each must wait till his own time comes."

One would think it a very easy thing to say, "May all your descendants become famous!" but in China that wish, which

has passed into a proverb, is expressed by the four words *Lan kuei t'êng fang*, or "May the Epidendrum and the Cassia put forth extraordinary fragrance!" To show how close is their observance of nature, we may quote one more saying from the Chinese, which teaches us that—

"Ere man is aware
That spring is here,
The plants have found it out."

Danish proverbs are not without their reference to flowers and plants. One says "Flowers are the pledges of fruit," and another, "You must knock a long while against an Alder-bush before you get a swarm of bees out of it." From the same people we learn, what indeed everybody knew already, that "A bad tree does not yield good Apples," a truth already enunciated by the Great Teacher Himself when He said, "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Matt. vii. 18). The Germans tell us "As the tree, so the fruit;" while the Danes reiterate the truth when they say again, "As the virtue in the tree, such is the fruit." The Italians inform us that "A tree often transplanted is never loaded with fruit;" the Spanish that "A tree often transplanted neither grows nor thrives," a saying which the Germans repeat in like manner, "Plants oft removed never thrive." We do not believe in too much moralizing, and therefore leave the reader to guess for himself the lessons which proverbs like these are intended to teach. In my younger days I happened to reside in a quiet little Sussex village, where also dwelt a young lady, who had rather high notions of her own position and the kind of lover she ought to secure. One after another came in her way, though it is very questionable whether they ever solicited her hand; but of this one and that she remarked, "They are not good enough for me." It was but natural that the simple folk who lived around should call up one of their

old proverbs and remark, "She'll go round and round the Apple trees till she finds a Crab." I was forcibly reminded of this when I read the saying which passes current in France, "Qui choisit, prend le pire"; *i.e.*, "He who chooses takes the worst," or as we say more colloquially, "Pick and choose, and take the worst." There is another French proverb, "Moitié figue, moitié raisin," which it would sorely puzzle any one who had been "reared up in Devonshare" to understand. For in that wonderful county Raisins are called Figs, and a Plum-pudding is Fig (or figgy) pudding. It will naturally be asked what name they give to Figs proper; and the reply is that they are here at no loss for words to set forth the difference between Raisin-figs and Common-figs so to speak; for the latter are variously called Dough-figs, Turkey-figs, and Broad-figs.

There is one other set of proverbs relating to plants to which I must briefly refer, seeing that they are universal property. "Ill weeds grow apace," say the English, French, Italians, and Dutch. The Spaniards and Portuguese add, "Ill weeds are not hurt by frost;" to which the Dane retorts, "Ill weeds grow the fastest and last the longest"; and the Spaniard sums up with the too true remark:—

"In the garden more grows
Than the gardener sows."

These sayings need no comment. Universal experience has taught us all that it is much easier to find seeds of evil springing up, than plants which will bring a goodly crop; and try what we will, human efforts alone will never eradicate those seeds of evil from the heart. Many proverbs have been originated by observing the conduct of the gardener and the farmer. What a number there are which attach themselves to the well-known habit of these industrious men, of casting their seed broadcast over the garden

plot or field. "*Sow* not money on the sea, lest it sink," says one; "He that *soweth* to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption," says the Apostle. "*Sow* good works, and thou shalt reap gladness."

Just as we in England say, "You don't catch old birds with chaff," so in South America they say, "He is too old a monkey to be caught with a Cabomba." The Cabomba is a very curious and interesting plant (*Lecythis*) commonly known as "Monkey Pot," which name is said to have arisen in the following manner:— When the cup of the Lecythis falls, its lid drops off, the seeds roll out, and it then becomes a hard pot with a narrow mouth. These pots are used for catching monkeys, by being filled with sugar and placed near the haunts of these creatures. Like the boy who put his hand in the jar for the nuts, these selfish animals not only eat all they can, but endeavour, when disturbed, to run away with their paws filled with the sugar. In so doing the jar goes with them, for the paw cannot be withdrawn while it clutches its prize; and so they fall into the snare laid for them, and are easily caught. But it is only the young and inexperienced monkeys that are caught in this manner, as the proverb just quoted testifies. There is an old saw to which I have made reference in another chapter, and which is found in other languages than our own, telling us that "Good wine needs no bush." This proverb originated in the custom (still observed abroad) of placing a branch of a tree or a bush outside the house in which liquors might be obtained; and in Chaucer we find reference to the garland used in decorating the ale-stake.

Some interesting proverbs relating to Ferns are given with notes of explanation in Bohn's "Handbook," to which we can here only direct general attention. I have had to omit many which I had hoped to insert; but the chapter is already long enough, and we must therefore close it with the remark that

there is scarcely a thing which may not be in some way or other illustrated by means of proverbial lore such as we have been studying. "It is said in the Bible that Gideon 'took thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with these he taught the men of Succoth.' The beautiful metaphor of the Brahmins, which Sir William Jones has made so familiar, and by which the Sandal-tree perfuming the axe which lays it low, is made to teach the love of enemies, and many other ethnical scriptures, show how deeply the poetical and moral sentiment of primitive races became associated with trees and flowers" (*Conway*). If we would keep our gardens free from weeds, and our hearts free from evil plants, or "roots of bitterness," let us bear in mind what a Northamptonshire peasant recently told me in the following homely but expressive rhyme, which still passes current as a proverb:—

"One year's seed,
Seven years' weed."

Or, as they give it in Oxfordshire: "One year's seeding makes seven years' weeding."

SHEPHERD'S PURSE (*Capsella Bursa-pastoris*).
a, plant; *b*, seed-vessel magnified; *c*, same in section.

CHAPTER VIII.

FLOWERS AND THE SEASONS.

IF our present chapter should be little more than a list of names, the study of this branch of flower-lore will not be without value or interest. It will help us to form some idea, perhaps, of the vast variety of flowers which now grace our gardens and hedgerows; will teach us how thoughtful the Creator has been in spreading over all the various seasons of the year, from morning till night, and from New Year to

Christmas, a plentiful array of blossoms and berries for cheering the eye and delighting the other senses of man; will reveal to us some of the marvels of plant-life; while, lastly, we may learn something more of the history of words, of the calendar, and other subjects which are worthy our attention.

We will begin with the lower divisions of time and gradually ascend the scale; and as we do so our first business will be to notice that some flowers bear the name of a particular hour or period of the day. Thus we find a plant growing in Mexico and elsewhere, which has acquired the name of Four-o'clock. Its more general name is that of Marvel of Peru (*Mirabilis*), and it is so beautiful and fragrant a plant, that it well deserves the latter title. But its more colloquial name is not less appropriate, seeing that it has been given on account of the regularity with which, in some cases, the flower opens at that hour. I shall have to speak of another name for this plant by-and-by. Then we have a Lady Eleven-o'clock (*Ornithogalum*), or Eleven-o'clock Lady, called in French also *Dame* or *Belle d'onze heures*, from its waking up and opening its eyes so late in the day. For fifteen days it opens regularly at eleven o'clock. This flower is also called the Star of Bethlehem, by which name perhaps many will more easily recognize it.[1] There is a flower called the Changeable Rose (*Hibiscus mutabilis*), on account of the fact that though the flower, when first it opens, is white, it soon changes to rose-colour, and then to purple. In the West Indies all these changes take place in one day, but when the plant is brought to these climes a week is required for the process. This flower is a native of the East Indies, from which parts the French carried it to their settlements in the West Indies. The name which has been given this ever-changing flower by the French is *Fleur d'une heure*. It comes into blossom in November. Another species of Hibiscus is the Venice Mallow, which is a native of Italy and Austria, bears a

purple and yellow flower, and has long been known in our English gardens as Mallow of an Hour, or Good-Night at Noon. Gerarde remarks that "it should rather be Good-Night at Nine; for this beautiful flower opens at eight in the morning, and, having received the beams of the sun, closes again at nine. Ovid" (he continues), "in speaking of the Adonis flower, is thought to describe the Anemone, or Wind-flower, which we rather deem to be this quick-fading Mallow; for it is evident that Adonis flower, and all under the title of Wind-flower, last more than one day; but this is so frail that *it scarcely lasts an hour.* Bion of Smyrna, an ancient poet, says in his epitaph on Adonis, that the Wind-flower sprung from Venus's tears while she was weeping for Adonis; but, doubtless, the plant was mistaken by the poet, considering the fragility of the flower, and the matter whereof it sprung, that is a woman's tears, which last not long; as this flower, *flos horæ*, or Flower of an Hour." Surely, Master Gerarde, you treat woman's tears too lightly!

MALLOW (*Malva Sylvestris*).

a, spray of blossom and fruit; *b*, flower reversed; *c*, fruit; *d*, section of fruit.

We must not here forget the Goat's Beard (*Tragopogon*) which is called Go to bed at Noon. The quaint writer whose

remarks we have just quoted in a modernized form may now add his testimony in his own style. "It shutteth it selfe at twelve of the clocke, and sheweth not his face open untill the next dayes sunne do make it floure anew, whereupon it was called *Go to bed at Noon.*" The same flower was also called Noon-flower or Noontide on account of the same peculiarity. If the morning has been so highly favoured as that it should not be regarded as any peculiarity for a flower to be in blossom then, it is not so with the evening; for while I have as yet never heard of a flower, so far as I remember, called the Morning Flower, there are a variety bearing the name of Evening or Night. This is not to be wondered at, for when we find a flower reversing the natural order of things and turning night into day, it is but reasonable that we should take special note of that flower, and mark it as one given to midnight revelry. Our first flower is the Evening Primrose, the latter portion of the name being derived from the pale, primrose tint of the blossoms; the former, from its beginning to wake up just as other flowers are going to sleep. Here and there a blossom may sometimes be seen expanded in the daytime, but the majority of flowers do not open till six or seven o'clock in the evening, and then they are slightly fragrant, a beautiful characteristic of many night-blooming flowers. It would seem that, as they open during a period when beauty of appearance would be disregarded, on account of the darkness, they make up for the disadvantage by the diffusion of the choicest odours.

> "You Evening Primroses, when day has fled,
> Open your pallid flowers, by dews and moonlight fed."

This flower is also known as Evening Star.

Another of these most fragrant flowers is the Night-blooming Cereus (*C. grandiflorus*), whose blossoms begin to expand about seven or eight o'clock in the evening, and are fully-blown about

midnight. Before the cock crows, that is by three or four o'clock in the morning, they are quite decayed. But during its short continuance, there is scarcely any flower known which possesses greater attractions. The calyx, when open, measures nearly a foot in diameter, so that this magnificent flower far exceeds in size our largest Sunflowers; being, when fully expanded, about three feet in circumference! The outer sepals, and especially their external faces, are of a dark-brown colour; the inner, of a splendid yellow, gradually shaded into the petals, which are of a pure and brilliant white; and the centre of the flower is filled by the numerous recurved stamens that surround the style. It will be easily understood, from this brief description, that when half-a-dozen or a dozen of these flowers are open at the same time, as is frequently the case, the effect is magnificent. They look like so many moons, each vieing with the other to see which shall make the greatest show, while they lavishly disperse their fragrance on the soft evening air. Thus—

> "Darkness shows us worlds of light
> We never see by day."

The *Victoria regia* is also a nocturnal flower, although its name does not indicate the fact. The Marvel of Peru, however, of which we have already spoken, whilst it sometimes bears the name of Four o'clock, is also called Lady of the Night, since it sometimes begins to open as late as the Evening Primrose. In fact, it is quite possible that some confusion has crept in here, on account of there being two or three species of one plant; the true Four o'clock having been mistaken for the Lady of the Night (*Mirabilis dichotoma*). This flower has received another name from the learned botanists who have paid attention to its peculiar properties, and it is frequently known as *Nyctago* or the Night-blower. One of the Jessamines, too, is called *Nyctanthes*, from its

expanding only towards night (*nyct-* or *νύξ* being the Greek word for night). The German name for the same flower is Nacht-blume; *i.e.*, Night-blossom. There is also the Night-rocket, another very fragrant flower, and frequently known as Dame's Violet. The botanical name is Hesperis, which, also, is a Greek word (ἕσπερος) corresponding with our word Vesper or Evening. These are the flowers—

"That keep
Their odour to themselves all day;
But when the sunlight dies away,
Let the delicious secret out
To every breeze that roams about."

This plant is better known, perhaps, as the Night-odorous Stock, or Night-smelling Rocket. It was for many ages a favourite with the ladies of Germany, whence it obtained its name of Dame's Violet. In that country also it bears a name connecting it with the season of darkness—*Nacht Viole* or Night Violet. The Germans also call the Tuberose, which again is famous for the fragrance of its flowers, more particularly in the evening, *Nacht-liebste.* This is one of the flowers remarkable for its luminosity, or the peculiarity of emitting sparks of light. The people of Malay have a similar name for the Tuberose among themselves, calling it the Mistress of the Night. Thus Moore, in speaking of the habits of the plant in its native country, says:—

"The Tuberose, with her silvery light,
That in the gardens of Malay
Is called the Mistress of the Night,
So like a bride, scented and bright,
She comes out when the sun's away."

There is a flower which one frequently meets with abroad, belonging to the same family as our common Convolvulus, which bears the name of *Fior de Notte* or the Flower of Night (*Ipomœa*).

The Ipomœa, as we see it in China, India, Malaya, and other Eastern countries, is a very choice flower, the Red Indian Jasmine, as the French call one kind, being especially noticeable for its colour and form. This is called Kâma-latâ, or Love's Creeper, its elegant blossoms being, as Sir W. Jones expresses it—

> "Celestial rosy-red,
> Love's proper hue."

If we turn to botanical names of plants we shall find that two of our commonest flowers at least bear the impress of evening upon them. I have already referred to the word Vesper; and from this we get Vespertina as a designation of certain flowers whose evening proclivities are somewhat remarkable. Take the common White Evening Lychnis (*Lychnis vespertina*), which grows in hedgerows, banks, and fields during the summer. It is the consort of the Red Campion, or, as we commonly call it in various parts, Bachelor's Button, Robin Flower, or Robin Hood. But this sweet flower attracts little attention compared with her gayer brother, although the fragrance of the White Lychnis is something delightful after about five o'clock in the evening. This is why it has merited the name of Vespertina, the vesper or evening flower. A relative of this is the night-flowering Catchfly (*Silene noctiflora*), which opens its petals as a rule between five and six o'clock.

Observations made by various botanists on the opening and closing of flowers have led to the opinion that there is no hour of the day when the flowers of some plant or other do not begin to open, and in the majority of instances they close at sunset. With the exception of a few hours near midnight, there is also no time at which blossoms do not close up their bright eyes and go to rest. I shall perhaps be able to refer to this subject more at length in another chapter. Nothing can be more beautiful

amongst our native wild flowers (as a recent writer has already remarked), than a field in which the night-blooming Catchfly grows abundantly. During the day no trace of the plant can be seen, but at seven o'clock in the evening a remarkable change has taken place. As though called up at the stroke of a fairy wand, the little blossoms, sparkling like gems, are scattered thickly over the ground, and the sight is not easily forgotten by the lover of flowers.[2] There is a well-known plant, or rather there are several, known as Night-shade; but as the name does not refer to any peculiar nightly properties, it is sufficient to mention it here for the sake of completeness in our list.

Having now pretty well exhausted the *common* names of night-flowering, night-scented, and night-named plants, so far as they relate to English botany, let us turn to the flowers which bear the stamp of day upon them. Every one will say, "I know what flower will be first mentioned here—the Daisy." True! It must stand first, for, so far as English names are concerned, it is without a rival. In fact, we could not well find room for another eye-of-day, now that this little flower has so long and ably filled the place. How long the flower has been known as the day's-eye among us I am scarcely prepared to say. Of this flower one writer says: "I begin with its name. Of this there can be little doubt; it is the 'Day's-eye,' the bright little eye that opens only by day, and goes to sleep at night. This, whether the true derivation or not, is no modern fancy. It is, at least, as old as Chaucer, and probably much older. Here are Chaucer's well-known words:—

> "'Men by reason well it calle may
> The Daïsie, or else the Eye of Day,
> The Empresse and the flowre of flowres all.

"And Ben Jonson boldly spoke of them as 'bright Daye's-eyes.'" It must be borne in mind that the name has since been borrowed

for other flowers, so that we now have the Horse-Daisy, Great-daisy, Moon-daisy, or Ox-eye daisy, as names for a large kind of wild Chrysanthemum, the Michaelmas-daisy, the Sea-daisy, or Thrift, and the Blue-daisy (*Globularia*) of the south of Europe. In Somersetshire we meet with a Winter-daisy, and in other local dialects the name is frequently employed. Thus we find in Mr. Britten's work on "Plant Names" more than twenty such names, many of which, however, refer to one and the same plant.

Amongst botanists there are a few other flowers which are known as day-flowers, as, for example, the Red Campion, which is called in botanical language *Diurna*, to distinguish it from *Vespertina;* it is the Day-Campion as distinct from the Night-Campion. Then, if we turn to names formed from Greek words, we find a class known as Day-beauties (from the Greek words *Hêmera* and *Kallos*), the name having been given, perhaps, because the Tuberose was rather the Night-beauty; and, belonging to the same family, had need to be somehow distinguished. Besides, the flower seldom lasts a second day; and hence the French name it *Belle d'un jour.*

We have at least one flower which bears the name of Afternoon. Speaking of the Iris, one writer says: "One of the most curious species of this genus of plants that we have seen is the *Iris dichotoma,* Afternoon Iris, or Scissor-plant. It has the slenderest stem, and the smallest flower, of all the Irises, and the corolla *never expands until after midday,* hence the trivial (or second) name. It is a native of Dauria, and is called *Cheitschi* (scissors) in the Mogul language, from the form of the fork produced by the two branches which support the flowers. It is not even 'the flower of a day,' for it never fails to collapse before night by a twofold inflexion, rolling inwards at the limb or upper portion, and twisting spirally together at the ungues or lower."

When we proceed to longer divisions of time, we meet with

plants indicative of the number of weeks required for bringing them into blossom, as the Ten-week Stock; while the division of time by moons brings us to the Monthly Rose. Some flowers bear the name of the month in which they first appear. We have, for example, the Fair Maid of February, as a name for the Snowdrop. The French also call one kind *Violette de Fevrier*, or February Violet. The former name is said to have been given to this first of spring flowers, "from the white blossoms opening about the second of that month, when maidens dressed in white walked in procession at the feast of the Purification," but although a common book-name, it seems neither to be very old nor very generally in use as a familiar designation of the flower. We have more than one local name for March flowers. In Northamptonshire there is a March Daisy, by which name the early flowers of the common daisy may perhaps be known. There is also a March Violet, so called again from the time of flowering. In France and Italy this flower (*Viola odorata*), which we generally call the Sweet Violet, is known as *Violette de Mars* and *Viola Marzia* respectively—names which exactly correspond with our name of March Violet. Some other local names are merely corruptions of other words, as, for instance, March Beetle or March Pestill. The Anglo-Saxon name for March was *Hlýd-mónáð*, which in the west of England was corrupted into Lide, in which form it still lives on in some old proverbs; as well as in the name Lide Lily, by which the Daffodil or Lent Lily is intended. By April, flowers are becoming so common that no one is regarded as particularly calling for appropriation to that month.

"April brings the Primrose sweet,
Scatters Daisies at our feet."

But flowers are equally plentiful in May. Why then should any, not to say so many, bear the name of that month? The

answer is simple. May was the flower month, Flora's month, and the Madonna's or Virgin's month. In this month special honour was paid to these various goddesses by superstitious people, and hence the need for having flowers suitable for the occasion. Among the many flowers called May, May-blossom, May-flower, we find first and foremost the Hawthorn, which is in some places also called May-bush, May-bloom, and May-tree. In Devon the beautiful clusters of Lilac blossom are called May; so are the flowers of the Laurustinus. Then we find the Snow-ball-tree or Guelder Rose called May Rose, or May-tosty; a name I heard applied to the flower last year in Somersetshire. The Lily-of-the-Valley is called May Lily or May blossoms; while the Cowslip, Marsh Marigold, Stitchwort, and Lady's Smock are some of the other flowers dedicated to the May Queen.

This is, perhaps, the most proper place for giving some little attention to those customs which have so largely linked our sweetest and choicest flowers with this "merry month of May."[3] The subject is so extensive that I almost fear to take it in hand, but my object shall be to give as many of the real facts as possible in the smallest compass, taking note only of such customs as bear a distinct and close relation to flower and plant lore. The Romans as early as the time of Romulus, we are told, had already instituted a festival in honour of Flora, whose name explains itself. This festival was called Floralia, and was commenced on the 28th of April, continuing to the 1st of May. It was held as a proof of pleasure and joy at the reappearance of spring blossoms and flowers, the harbingers of fruit. "When the flowers appeared in the fields, and the time of the singing of the birds was come: when the Fig-tree put forth her figs, and the Vine with tender grapes gave out their smell" (Canticles ii. 11-13), then Flora, the goddess of flowers and spring, was honoured by the people, who—

"Let one great day,
To celebrate sports, and floral play,
Be set aside."

The worship of this goddess, or her compeer, amongst heathen nations, may be traced back to very early times. She was an object of religious veneration among the Phocians and Sabines long before the establishment of Rome, and the early Greeks worshipped her under the name of Chloris. The resemblance between the names Flora and Chloris, which had a very similar meaning, led the later Romans to identify the two divinities. To this people we probably owe the introduction of the festival into England. Formerly Flora took her departure from our midst as soon as Ceres, the Goddess of Agriculture and Pomona, the Goddess of Fruit, made their appearance, as if the country were not sufficiently spacious to contain the three goddesses at the same time; but since we have naturalized the plants of China and Florida to our climate, we are permitted to see these three deities walking hand in hand.

One of the most remarkable instances of the survival of the worship of Flora in our own country is supplied by what is known as the Helston Furry Dance. Much attention has of late years been given to this curious observance by antiquaries and others, and the following brief account may be supplemented by reference to the works quoted in the notes. The Furry Day is not the 1st, but the 8th of May, and the dance is by some called the Faddy Dance. Some think that the name of Furry Dance is derived from the Cornish word *fuer*, which means a fair or merry-making. It is more probable that Furry is a corruption of Flora, which may have become *flurry*, and then changed to *furry* under the influence of the Cornish word. At any rate, if we contrast the tradition that the custom commemorates the preservation of the town from destruction, when a fiery dragon passed over it, with the fact that

the name of the day and dance, as well as the manner of observing them, bear evident proofs of connection with Flora, I think we shall decide in favour of the latter. "This Helston Flora bears evident traces of Roman parentage. The streets and houses are profusely decorated with flowers; the ladies themselves are floral studies; and the lords of creation vie with each other in the size of their bouquet, which is worn in the button-hole, and is occasionally so large that one is forcibly reminded of the coachmen driving in pompous state to Her Majesty's drawing-room; but the Helstonian gentlemen are not content with only a nosegay; even their hats are bedizened with wreaths and sprigs." In 1881, as Furry Day fell on a Sunday, the dance was kept on the following day. In the morning the various inhabitants interested in the day's proceedings went out and procured boughs with which to deck the houses. This custom is of very ancient date and widespread observance. Aubrey, who wrote two hundred years ago, tells us that in his day it was still customary in Woodstock, and other English towns, including London, for the people to go out on May-day to bring home boughs, "which they sett before their dores." Flowers are cultivated diligently for the Helston *fête*, the maidens being specially adorned with Lilies-of-the-Valley, while every youth aspires to the possession of a Tulip, which he places in his hat. The market-house is the place of assembly, young men bringing bouquets of fresh flowers for their partners, and each one is as joyous as the importance of the day can make him. When the band strikes up the Flora, or Furry tune,—a lively melody, and not without some charm,—the dance begins. Last year the dancing through the streets was confined to the gentry; but on former occasions, during living memory, there were four or five different classes of dancers, composed of the gentry, the tradesmen, the servant class, and others. Down the street, through the public buildings, and past all the principal shops

and dwelling-houses, the dancers wend their way, the master and mistress often standing at their doors, surrounded by the younger folk, to wish the merry-makers joy, or receive them into their houses, through the front and out at the back into the street again. In this way the day used to be spent, and if some of the customs are dying out, still the day is largely observed with the accustomed heartiness and joviality of former times. In Cornwall not long ago other customs of interest were observed early in May. On the eve preceding May-day a number of young people assembled at an inn and waited till the clock struck twelve. They then perambulated the town, formed a company, and went off into the country to some appointed place, where a dance was led off, and the party went in search of May. Between five and six in the morning they returned home bringing the May with them, and decked the houses and porches with green boughs of Elm, Sycamore, and Hawthorn. This day is called "Dipping-day," as the juveniles endeavour to throw water on any person they meet who has not the protection of a piece of May in his hat or button-hole. In some parts of the country May is the regular word for a sprig of Elm, not Hawthorn, gathered early in the morning of the first of the month.

It is generally acknowledged that few of our present English customs have a higher claim to heathen antiquity than the erection of the May-pole, garlanded with flowers, as a signal-post of mirth and rejoicing for the day. In former times this pole was fixed up in some given place, and there remained; but in our day it is usually carried in procession, or takes the form of a pyramid covered with green leaves and flowers, such as the chimney-sweeps still wear on May-day as they go round the streets dancing, under the title of Jack-in-the-Green, or Jack-in-the-Bush. In Germany, again, "in the blithe springtime, when the plant-world has awakened from its winter sleep, the May-tree, the head of the

family to which our May-pole belongs, is sought for in the forest, as it is also all over northern Europe, is carted away in triumph and, decked with ribbons and other bravery, is solemnly planted on the village green, or beside the peasant's house." This is what one writer says on the subject, and I add the paragraph with the more pleasure, because it shows signs of original research, and deep interest, in our fast-fading customs. "The first of May was of old a favourite holiday; and young people went into the woods and fields early in the morning, and brought home branches of green, and flowers, to hang over the doors of their houses,—singing as they went an old song, which, mangled and garbled, has come down to us through the memories of many youthful generations, and which we still sometimes hear, when the village children bring round their flowery poles on Whitsun Monday, to which day the remnant of the old May festival has been prorogued in our own village: one of the verses, as far as we could rescue it from an accompaniment of meaningless words, runs thus:—

"'We bring you a branch of May,
And though 'tis past and gone,
We brought it in the morning
Before the rising sun.

"'We bring you a branch of May,
And at your door it stands;
It is but a sprout,
But it's well budded out,
And made by our good Lord's hands."

"Doubtless this is a surviving remnant of a song of the olden times, sung by youths and maidens in the merry greenwood, and through the narrow streets of the old city in the days when Plantagenets and Tudors reigned in England. We read that on one occasion, Henry VIII. and his queen, Catherine of Arragon, joined in the

May-day festivals in the earliest and happiest days of that king's eventful reign."

It is said that good old Latimer, going one May-day to preach in a certain town, found all the church doors locked; and he was unable to secure an audience, as all the people had gone "a-maying." For—

> "Upon the first of May,
> With garlands fresh and gay,
> With mirth and music sweet,
> For such a season meet,
> They passe their time away."

We are told that it was an old custom in Suffolk in most of the farmhouses, that any servant who could bring in a branch of Hawthorn in full blossom on the 1st of May, was entitled to a dish of cream for breakfast. At Hitchin, in Hertfordshire, the people used to express their feelings towards their neighbours by decorating their doors before morning; those who were popular finding their doors decked with branches of trees, those who were not liked having the fact indicated by the presence of Nettles or other obnoxious weeds.

Brand gives us a most interesting and exhaustive account of the May Pole, the Queen of the May, and other similar matters; but it would be impossible for us to deal with such an extensive subject here; it must be sufficient that we have referred to the existence of many curious May customs, and pointed out where details respecting them may be found. In Sussex a few years since, and I believe the observance is still general, girls regularly went round with May garlands on the 1st of May. But they differ from those described by an early writer in the following words: "On the 1st of May, and the five or six days following, all the pretty young country girls that serve the town with milk, dress themselves up very neatly, and borrow abundance of silver plate,

whereof they make a pyramid, which they adorn with ribbons and flowers, and carry upon their heads instead of their common milk-pails. In this equipage, accompanied by some of their fellow milk-maids, and a bagpipe or fiddle, they go from door to door, dancing before the houses of their customers, in the midst of boys and girls, that follow them in troops, and everybody gives them something." I have known the mother, however, even in my time, put her silver jug, or whatever other piece of plate she might possess, into the May garland, so as to be exposed to view; and into it the money received by the children was proudly placed. The old May-day songs have now nearly all died out; but most of them have, I believe, been collected in various periodicals and antiquarian works. In Devonshire, dolls are carried about in baskets of flowers; and in other parts of England we find other local customs too numerous even to mention.

Since May has thus come in for the lion's share of attention and of flowers, it is not surprising if some of the months which follow feel the reaction. I know of no June flower, and even our July flower has obtained its name by craft rather than honesty, for it has no real relation to the month of July. If this were otherwise, we should have to admit that July sometimes comes in winter. If we get winter sometimes in our changeful climate in May, I scarcely think it can ever be said fairly to extend to July, and even if such were the case, it would not be true that July comes in winter. Yet hear what a writer says in an old work (1637) called "The Country House-wife's Garden." He calls Wall-flowers "July-flowers of the wall or Wall-July-flowers, or *Winter-July-flowers*, because growing in the walles, even in Winter . . . they will seeme dead in Summer, and yet revive in Winter." The name of July-flower seems to have been used by another old writer under the mistaken notion that it explained

the name Gillyflower. Drayton writes about—

"The curious choice clove July-flower."

This error has been frequently repeated in later works; and when Coles wrote of the Clove Gillyflower, he suited the error to the name, and said, "The chief time of their flourishing is in July, and therefore some will have them to be called *July Flowers*." Markham, again, who wrote of Winter-July-flowers, says he calls Gilliflowers by the common name, because they flower in July, and adds, "the best sort of them are called *Queene July-flowers*." Lord Bacon tells us that in July come Gillyflowers of all varieties. In Somersetshire the word Giloffer is still used in speaking of the Ten-week-Stock, while in North Devon the Wall-flower is so-called. The history of the word is instructive. In French it is Giroflée, which in turn leads back to *Caryophyllus*. The history of this latter form is of interest to philologists; from it let us turn to the form which still exists among ourselves. The French word, by a process known as metathesis or the transposition of letters, came in time to be pronounced among us as Gilofrée; it was spelt Gylofre by Chaucer, then Turner, in his "History of Plants," written in 1568, spelt it Gelouer, or Gelover, and from this the change to the Somersetshire word Giloffer, the common Gillyflower, and lastly July-flower, was perfectly easy and natural. Thus even July is robbed of what at first sight appeared to be its lawful property.[4] The following months do not call for attention, seeing that no flower of importance is, amongst us, called by any of their names.

If we now begin the year again, we shall find that many flowers bear the names of the four seasons, thus indicating, although less clearly, the particular time of the year to which they belong. Taking the spring first, we must place at the head of our list the beautiful Primrose; for whenever we speak of spring flowers,

the first that comes into our minds is the Primrose. Both for its simple beauty, and for its early arrival among us, we give it the first place over—

> "Whatsoever other flowre of worth
> And whatso other hearb of lovely hew,
> The joyous Spring out of the ground brings forth
> To cloath herself in colours fresh and new."

It is a plant equally dear to children and their elders, so that I cannot believe that there is any one (except Peter Bell) to whom

> "A primrose by the river's brink,
> A yellow primrose is to him—
> And it is nothing more."

The common and easy explanation of the name is that it means the first rose of the year, but—like so many explanations that are derived only from the sound and modern appearance of a name—this is not the true account. The full history of the word is too long to give here, and we must be content to send the reader to such works as will put the matter clearly before him. The real meaning of the term, when fully traced out, indicates that the Primrose is the first spring flower. But strange to say, the true Primrose is the Daisy, and in old books it is this latter flower which bears the name.[5] The Primrose has the honour of being called, in nearly a dozen different languages, the Flower of Spring, so that it may well stand first on our list. Passing by the Daisy, we are not surprised to find the Snowdrop coming forward as a claimant for the title of spring flower. One variety is, in fact, called the Spring Snowflake (*Leucojum vernum*), and this Latin word will remind us of a plant, which, from its early flowering, is known as Vernal-grass, or Spring-grass.

As the plants which are either popularly or botanically distinguished as spring flowers, are so numerous, we must leave the

reader to add to the list as his own inclination may lead him, and pass on to notice briefly a few flowers which are specially noted for their summer blossoms. The Ten-week-Stock is often called in French *Violette d'été*, or Summer Violet, the Italians calling it Summer Stock. If it be remarked that there is little similarity between a Stock and a Violet, we must remember that in times when botany had scarcely become a science, and popular fancy alone supplied the names of flowers, Violet was added to the name of many flowers having a purple tint or a fragrant smell. Hence the Stock has merited that name, as well as the title of Clove. The Periwinkle, it will be remembered, has, on account of its colour and use for magical purposes, been called the Sorcerers' Violet, a name which corresponds to the French *Violette des sorciers*; and we have seen that the Snowdrop, and several other flowers, are called Violets.

GARDEN ANEMONE.

In Somersetshire an old-fashioned shrub (*Kerria*), bearing a yellow flower, is popularly known as Summer Rose, though it might, I think, be more properly called Spring Rose, seeing that it was in full bloom this year in March. But names are, after all, very vaguely applied. As we have a Spring and Summer Snowdrop or Snowflake, so there is a kind (*Leucojum autumnale*) called the Autumn Snowflake. It is a native of Portugal, and

flowers in the month of September. Then, as our borders are graced by the bright flowers of the Spring Crocus, when as yet scarce another flower, save the Snowdrop, has put in an appearance, so we have the Autumnal or Saffron Crocus. The Star Lily is frequently known as the Autumnal Narcissus. There is also a flower (*Gentiana*) which, from the shape of its blossoms, and their season of opening, goes by the name of Autumn Bells, Bell-flower, or Violet. Before we pass on to the flowers of winter we may read the lines of Kirke White on one of the spring and autumn plants just alluded to. He says:—

> "Say, what impels, amid surrounding snow
> Congealed, the Crocus' flamy bud to grow?
> Say, what retards, amid the summer's blaze,
> The autumnal bulb, till pale declining days?
> The God of Seasons, whose pervading power
> Controls the sun, or sheds the fleecy shower;
> He bids each flower His quickening word obey,
> Or to each lingering bloom enjoins delay."

As it is regarded as somewhat a rarity to see a flower among ourselves in winter, it is not surprising that such as do come into blossom or fruit at that season should be commonly distinguished by this very natural epithet. In our local dialects we find many plants so named, which in more classical language are differently known. Thus the Hellebore is in Devonshire appropriately called Winter Rose, a name which is even more apt than that of Christmas Rose, by which it is more generally known. In Somerset again a small Chrysanthemum is called Winter Daisy, while the large varieties are known as Winter Geraniums. There is also the Winter Cherry, a graceful little shrub when its ripe cherry-like fruit is bright with a ruddy glow. Less familiar names are Winter Cress; Winter Aconite, a plant which comes into blossom in midwinter; Winter-weed, and Winter-green. This latter name is in Denmark given to the

green Ivy, a plant which remains true to its post when all others fold up their summer's dress, and put it by against the coming of bad weather, as some people use their umbrellas and ulsters. Without making any pretence at having given a complete list of seasonal flowers, we must now take leave of these, that we may spend a moment in talking over those names which are connected more intimately with Church festivals. I shall not include the various Saints' days, as another chapter treats of flowers connected with them.

The first season which has left its impress on our common flowers is Lent. Every one is aware that the Daffodil is named, after this ecclesiastically important period, Lent Lily. This is the flower of which Shakspere writes in the following lines:—

> "Daffodils
> That come before the swallow dares, and take
> The winds of March with beauty."

True, Shakspere will have to look to his laurels if we get many such winters and springs as we had in the years 1881-2; for the swallows announced their arrival in the west of England in March of last year, just at the time when the Daffodil was reaching its prime. Many a legend attaches to the flowers of this group, but with them we are not here concerned. I may observe that the following common names are in existence to-day in Devonshire, where abundance of these flowers grow. The people call the Daffodil Lent Rose, Lent Lily, Lent-a-Lily, and Lents; while speaking of more than one they call them again Lents, Lent Roses, Lent Rosen, Lent Lilies, and Lentils. This last form is a corruption which has easily crept in through confusion with another plant, the proper Lentil. In other languages this flower bears a name which is closely connected with and means the same as our Lent.[6]

We must not be too hard again on the rustic fabricators of

plant names, or too fastidious about using them because they are not scientifically accurate. If we say the Daffodil is neither a Rose nor a Lily, no one will be very likely to commend us for our smart discrimination; and it will be answered that the flowers are whatever the general vote consents to popularize as their name, and that if a Rose is a Rose, a Lent Rose is also a Lent Rose. We are quite content to abide by the *vox populi.*

"Fair Daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon:
As yet the early rising sun
Has not attained her noon.
Stay stay,
Until the hastening day
Has run
But to the evening song.
And having pray'd together, we
Will go with you along."

The flowers are also sometimes called Lent Cocks, "in allusion, it seems, to the barbarous custom of cock-throwing, which was prescribed by our forefathers for Lent, or rather for Shrove Tuesday. The boys, in the absence of live cocks to throw sticks at, practised the art of decapitation on the flower." On Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, or some other early day in Lent, it used to be customary in France and England to carry round garlands of flowers, and dress effigies called the Holly-boy and Ivy-girl, which they burnt as they would Guy Fawkes. This was probably to indicate that the festivities of the Christmas and New Year's tide had now come to an end.

Lady day, which falls on the 25th of March, is of course honoured with numbers of flowers, such as Lady's Smocks, Lady's Fingers, and the like, to which I have already given attention in the chapter on "The Virgin's Bower." Passion Sunday follows, and its name is indelibly impressed upon the Passion-flower. In another chapter I have spoken of some of the lore

centred around this plant. On Holy Cross Day the Blue Passion-flower is the ecclesiastical emblem.

"The Passion-flower long has blow'd
To betoken us signs of the Holy Rood,"

says the doggerel couplet. The poetry is little more to be commended than the old Romish idolatry to which it points. Palm Sunday has long been celebrated in England, as elsewhere, with processions and decorations, and since neither Palm nor Olive grow amongst us naturally, Willow and Yew have been employed in their place. It is on this account that these two trees are often known as Palms. Having already spoken of May customs, I ought perhaps here to dwell a little more fully on the subject of Palm Sunday ceremonies so far as they concern us in their relation to plant-lore.[7]

DWARF PALM (*Chamærops humilis*).
a tree; *b*, lower trunk; *c*, leaf; *d*, fruit.

"This is evidently called Palm Sunday," says Brand, "because, as the Ritualists say, on that day the boughs of Palm-trees used to be carried in procession, in imitation of those which

the Jews strewed in the way of Christ, when He went up to Jerusalem. The Palm-tree was common in Judæa, and planted, no doubt, everywhere by the waysides. Sprigs of Boxwood are still used as a substitute for Palms in Roman Catholic countries. The Consecration Prayer seems to leave a latitude for the species of Palm used instead of the real Palm." The boughs or branches employed used to undergo a regular blessing. The Olive also was sometimes employed, as we learn from the following quaint remarks:—"Wherefor holi Chirche this daye makith solempne processyon, in mynde of the processyon that Cryst made this dey: but for encheson (*i.e.*, occasion, cause) that wee have noone olyve that beurith greene leves, therefore we taken Palme, and geven instede of Olyve, and beare it about in processione." The *Palme* here mentioned seems to be the Yew; a tree which is actually mentioned in some of the MSS. from which this extract is taken.

"Among our superstitious forefathers," says another writer, "the Palm-tree, or its substitutes, Olive and Yew, were solemnly blessed, and some of their branches burnt to ashes, and used by the priests on Ash Wednesday, in the following year (or rather 'the ashes which they use this day are made of the Palmes blessed the Palm-Sunday before'); while other boughs were gathered and distributed among the pious, who bore them about in their then numerous processions. The practice was continued in this country until the second year of Edward VI., when that and other usages, considered as having been carried to an improper and superstitious extent, were abolished; though the youth in many places yet preserve some vestiges of the customs of the day, and gather Willow flowers or buds, or such other as happen to be in a forward state of preservation." The Box was substituted at Rome, the Yew in England, and from the latter circumstance some authors account for there being yet

one Yew tree at least in all the ancient churchyards throughout the kingdom. In Scotland, during the last century, a gala was still kept by the boys of the Lanark Grammar School on the Saturday before Palm Sunday; when they paraded the streets with a Palm, or its substitute, a large tree of the Willow kind, in blossom, ornamented with Daffodils, Box, and Mezereon. In the Churchwardens' accounts of various parishes, valuable records for the antiquary and folklorist, many entries occur of payments made for such articles as Palme, Palme-flowers, Box-flouers, Yew, and the like. As already stated, the Willow, as being frequently the only new-flowering tree as yet in blossom, has come to be known as the Palm in many places, from its frequent use on Palm Sunday. Coles, speaking of this tree, says: "The blossoms come forth before any leaves appear, and are in their most flourishing estate usually before Easter, divers gathering them to deck up their houses on Palm Sunday, and therefore the said flowers are called Palme."

> "Besides thy candles up do light, of vertue like in all,
> And Willow branches hallow, that they Palmes do use to call."

The following lines, said to be the production of Goethe, sum up several of the plants used on this occasion:—

> "In Rome upon Palm Sunday they bear true Palms,
> The Cardinals bow reverently and sing old Psalms:
> Elsewhere those Psalms are sung 'mid Olive branches,
> The Holly-branch supplies the place among the avalanches;
> More northern climes must be content with the sad Willow."

Possibly the following direction for the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. xxiii. 40) may have had something to do with the introduction of the Willow here: "And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs (*margin* fruit) of goodly trees, branches of Palm trees, and boughs of thick trees, and Willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days." Per-

haps I cannot better close my notes on Palm Sunday than by giving you one of Dr. Dasent's racy "Pickings from Poggio." It is entitled:—

"LAGGING LENT.—Bell is the name of a very rustic town on our Apennine Mountains, and in it dwelt a priest ruder and more unlearned than the inhabitants. One year this fellow, because he knew nothing about times and seasons, never gave out the arrival of Lent to the people. But going to buy something at Terra Nova on the Saturday before Palm Sunday, and seeing the priests preparing branches of Olives and Palms for the next day, he began to wonder what it all meant, and at last saw his mistake, and how he had let Lent slip by without any observation by his flock. So when he went back to his town he got ready Olive branches and Palms for the Sunday. On Sunday morning he addressed the people as follows:—

"'This is the day on which branches of Olives and Palms are wont to be given out. Eight days hence will be Easter. During the next week alone we must do penance, nor shall we have a longer fast this year, and the reason of it is this: the carnival this year was very slow in coming, because, on account of the frost and the badness of the roads, it was not able to cross the mountains, and for the same cause Lent has travelled with so slow and weary steps, that now it has brought no more than one week with it, all the rest being left on the way. For this short time, therefore, that it will abide with you, be sure you all of you confess, and do penance.'"

Mr. Henderson tells us that in his boyhood they used to go and gather Willow and make it into crosses for Palm Sunday. They formed them like a St. Andrew's Cross, with a tuft of Catkins or blossoms at each point, binding them with knots and bows of ribbon. There is a proverb still current in the north of England, to the effect that "He that hath not a Palm in his

hand on Palm Sunday must have his hand cut off;" and the crosses used on these days may still be seen in some out-of-the-way places, suspended on the cottage walls during the rest of the year.

In April we come upon Easter-Sunday and Easter-tide, and we must not forget to notice that the Anemone has in French gained the name of Pasques, from its blossoming at this season. From this source we have obtained our name of Pasque-flower, or Passe-flower; referring, as every one will see, to the Passover and Paschal ceremonies. In Devonshire, as I quite recently discovered, the pretty little Stitchwort (*Stellaria Holostea*) is sometimes called Whit-Sunday, or White-Sunday. Its delicate white blossoms, with golden-dusted stamens, have had something to do with connecting the plant with "White-Sunday." This is the flower, it will be remembered, which in other parts of Devonshire is called Pixy, and concerning which the children say that you must not gather it, or you will be pixy-led. I may perhaps remind the reader that this White-Sunday is quite a distinct day from Whit-Sunday, although the two are, through the similarity of their names, often confused. White-Sunday is the first Sunday after Easter, or six weeks before Whit-Sunday. Perhaps the term Low-Sunday is better known in connection with this day; but the name of this tiny flower teaches us that at one time the name of White-Sunday must have been very popular, and that the flowers must have come into blossom just in time to commemorate that festival. How this flower rather than any other should have merited the name, will be gathered from the following explanation of the term White-Sunday as given by a writer of more than two hundred years ago. In a curious volume of sermons printed in 1652 is a discourse for White or Low Sunday, in which we read: "This day is called *White* or *Low* Sunday, because in the primitive Church, those neophytes (or new converts) that on Easter-Eve were baptized and *clad in white garments* did

to-day put them off, with this admonition, that they were to keep within them a perpetual candour of spirit." The editor of Brand's valuable work on our popular antiquities says: "It may be that in England the Sunday in question was never actually called *White Sunday*." Our study of flower lore teaches us that the name used actually to exist in Devonshire at least, and perhaps this little fact will help us to form some idea of the value of collecting the popular names of flowers, for by it we have been able to establish a point which had before been a matter of dispute and uncertainty.

For Royal Oak Day we must refer to another chapter. Trinity Sunday reminds us that there is a plant, generally known among us by the popular name of Pansy, which is sometimes called Herb Trinity, from its having three colours in one flower; the same name being also given to the Anemone, on account of its having three leaflets combined in one leaf. The shape of the Pansy leads the Devonshire folk frequently to call it Heart-Pansy, as well as Heart's-ease, or, as I have heard it pronounced, Heart-seed. But these flowers are not associated particularly with Trinity Sunday, otherwise than in name; the word Trinity in each case calling to mind the fact that it is usual to regard the Godhead under this aspect. At a place called Caerwis, in Wales, it used to be customary on Corpus Christi Day, or the Thursday following Trinity Sunday, or on the eve of that day, to strew a kind of fern before the doors of the houses. This fern was known as Rhedyn Mair, or Mary's Fern, which would lead us to suppose that it may have been the Maiden-hair. In England this day used to be widely observed, and flowers, garlands, and flags were employed in the decoration of churches for the occasion. In North Wales flowers and herbs were strewn before the doors.

We now proceed to Midsummer, and here we find the Ox-eye again, under the new name of Midsummer Daisy; while the

Orpine plant (*Sedum*) is called Midsummer Men. Aubrey makes mention of a little flower which was largely employed in Surrey two hundred years ago for making garlands, and which went by the name of Midsummer Silver. I have elsewhere spoken of the fern-seed, which, being gathered on the eve of Midsummer-day, will render people invisible or bring them great wealth.

A whole quarter passes, and we reach Michaelmas with its Daisy and Crocus. The cold winds now soon begin to blow, the flowers "go underground," as they say in Devonshire, to seek warmth and shelter there, and nothing is left for us but to make ready to give old Father Christmas a hearty reception. He comes at last, if tardily, and now the Holly is brought into prominence, for it is popularly known as Christmas. And with as brief a notice of Christmas flower-lore as possible, I will bring this chapter to a close.[8]

Christmas Day is a festival of the Church, now observed on December 25th, and intended to commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ; and although it is not now marked by the fervid hospitality which characterized its observance among our forefathers, yet many remnants of the old customs still linger amongst us. The season is still sometimes known as Yule-tide, and the Yule-log, or Christmas-log, still retains its early name in many places. This old name of Yule links us very closely with the northern races of Europe. A great deal has been written about the word Yule, some supposing it to be connected with a word meaning to revolve, to go round as a wheel, and so referring to the sun, which has now made another revolution, and come round again to the time of the New Year. It must be borne in mind that our Christmas festivities have been grafted on to, or taken the place of, an old heathen festival connected with sun-worship; the early custom having been almost, if not quite, universally observed. I cannot go into the subject fully here, tempting as it is; that

is rather the work of the mythologist, the antiquary, and the general folklorist. We are here particularly concerned with flower and plant lore; and may remark that the ceremonies observed in heathen times at May, at Midsummer Eve, and at Christmas-tide, were radically one and the same. M. de Gubernatis says: "The customs connected with the Christmas Tree are too prevalent in Europe to call for any explanation of their origin here. In Sweden, Denmark, Germany, France, England, and Russia the Christian population gather their little ones on Christmas Eve around a tree, generally a Fir, which is illuminated with wax tapers or candles, decked out with flowers and ribbons, loaded with gilded fruit, sugar plums, and various kinds of presents." In Italy the Christmas Tree is no longer popular or general, its place being taken up by the May-pole and its accompanying floral festivities; of which the symbolism is exactly the same as that associated with the Christmas Tree. It must not, however, be supposed that the Italians never had a Christmas Tree, for very clear traces of its former popularity are still to be found. The Germans are more strong in their support of the old customs than we are in England. When I was in China the few German residents living in Canton could not allow the happy season to pass without a tree being prepared and set up in the mission schoolroom, to the extreme delight of the poor little "heathen Chinese," most of whom had never seen such a sight before. Our Christmas ceremonies usually begin on Christmas Eve, when the Yule-log is burned. This old custom is fast dying out, but in Devonshire it is still observed. Often, in the place of a log, a faggot is employed, and in the West of England the Ashen faggot is a regular institution. I was dining at the house of a Devonshire farmer one Sunday just after Christmas, and, having occasion to turn over the pages of a large Prayer-Book, came across an unfinished letter. It had been commenced by a servant

who had recently left the situation, and had remained unnoticed in the book before me. The girl was writing to her friends at home to inform them that she had spent a very pleasant Christmas. Among other items of information she remarked that "all the men-servants came in on Christmas Eve, and sat around the Ashen faggot, drinking the cider master had put out for them." The Ashen faggot was bound around with a number of bands or withes, and as each withe was burned asunder a new jug of cider was expected,—the men who made up the faggot taking care to put as many bands around it as possible, to ensure a good supply of drink. The custom is still largely observed in many Devonshire villages and hamlets. The word clog, meaning a log or block of wood, is still in use in the same places. A person once informed me that her husband "seed a vox wid a clog tied to en," or as we should say, "saw a fox with a log tied to it;" and on another occasion she added, "I dĕ veel 'siv I'd a got a clug tied to me." A poem written in 1795 thus refers to the faggot, bandages, and cider:—

"Thy welcome Eve, lov'd Christmas, now arrived,
The parish bells their tunefull peals resound,
And mirth and gladness every breast pervade.
The pondrous Ashen faggot, from the yard,
The jolly farmer to his crowded hall
Conveys, with speed; where, on the rising flames
(Already fed with store of massy brands),
It blazes soon; nine bandages it bears,
And as they each disjoin (so custom wills),
A mighty jug of sparkling cyder's brought,
With brandy mixt, to elevate the guests."

The brands were originally saved, that they might serve to relight the Christmas fire on the following year.

"With the last year's brand
Light the new blocks";

a custom of great interest to the student of mythology.

The ceremony of decking houses and churches with evergreens at Christmas is of great antiquity, and was observed in many countries hundreds of years ago, just as we still find a similar custom observed in the East at New Year,—showing us that the origin of the observances is the same in each case. It was on account of the heathen practices being so general that the early councils condemned the use of Holly, Ivy, and other evergreens and flowers for Christmas decorations. The Mistletoe has long been popular for hanging in the house at this season of the year. "It is not a matter of surprise," says a recent writer, "that a plant of such peculiar aspect, which occurs in such a remarkable position as the Mistletoe, should have awakened the attention of various races, and exerted influence over their religious ideas. It played an especially important part among the Gauls. . . . A remnant of this seems to exist still in France, for the peasant boys use the expression, 'Au gui l'an neuf,' as a New Year's greeting. It is also a custom in Britain to hang the Mistletoe to the roof on Christmas Eve; the men lead the women under it, and wish a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Perhaps the Mistletoe was taken as a symbol of the new year, on account of its leaves giving the bare tree the appearance of having regained its foliage." As showing the connection between Christmas and May, it may be remarked that a quaint old carol still preserved to us leads us to the conclusion that it was formerly customary at Christmas to set up in each village a long pole decked with Holly and Ivy, after the fashion of the May-pole in summer time. In Brand's "Popular Antiquities," as well as in an interesting volume of "Christmas Carols and Ballads," will be found a variety of poetical effusions in celebration of the Holly and Ivy decorations, as well as of Laurel, Mistletoe, and other evergreens.

"Now with the bright Holly all the temples strow,
With Laurel green, and sacred Mistletoe."

In "Frithiof's Saga" is a curious old design intended to represent the seasons figuratively. On December 20th we have the figure of two Fir-trees, to indicate that that day was the old Yule. In a note we are told that it was formerly customary in Sweden, and is still so in many districts, to place two Fir or Pine-trees on Yule-eve at the entrance of the house. It is still a part of the children's Yule sports that a small Pine-tree, full of candles, fruit, and ornaments shall be set on their table. The other emblems are interesting, and as our present chapter is in relation to the seasons, I will here add those which concern our subject. In March we see a tree without leaves, because at that time the buds are just beginning to swell. A month later and the tree is in leaf, indicating that summer is now approaching. On the 25th of the month a bird on a tree indicates the time of the cuckoo's arrival. In May the season is indicated by an ear of corn, this being the time when the winter-rye begins to shoot into ear. The 25th of May is often represented by some flowers, while June 17th, being St. Botolf's Day (the old Turnip-man), is distinguished by a turnip, because on that day seeds were sown. The 24th of June is set forth by means of the Midsummer Pole, or, as it is usually called, the May-pole. On Midsummer Eve the young folk assemble to raise a high pole, adorned with leaves, flowers, and ribbons, around which they dance the whole night. Thus May and Midsummer are connected, and we know that Midsummer is a regular day for sun-worship. On the 29th of June a flower is used to indicate that the time has come for gathering herbs and plants for medical and magical purposes; and so on throughout the calendar. I may fitly bring this chapter to a close by quoting *An Early Calendar of English Flowers*:—

"The Snowdrop, in purest white arraie,
First rears her hedde on Candlemas daie;

While the Crocus hastens to the shrine
Of Primrose love on S. Valentine.
Then comes the Daffodil, beside
Our Ladye's Smock at our Ladye-tide.
Aboute S. George, when blue is worn,
The blue Harebells the fields adorn ;
Against the day of Holie Cross,
The Crowfoot gilds the flowerie grasse.
When S. Barnabie bright smiles night and daie,
Poor Ragged Robin blossoms in the haie.
The Scarlet Lychnis, the garden's pride,
Flames at S. John the Baptist's tide.
From Visitation to S. Swithin's showers,
The Lilie-White reigns Queen of the floures ;
And Poppies, a sanguine mantle spred
For the blood of the Dragon S. Margaret shed.
Then under the wanton Rose, agen,
That blushes for Penitent Magdalen,
Till Lammas daie, called August's Wheel,
When the long Corn stinks of Camamile.
When Mary left us here belowe,
The Virgin's Bower is full in blow ;
And yet anon, the full Sunflowre blew,
And became a starre for Bartholomew.
The Passion-floure long has blowed,
To betoken us signs of the Holy Roode.
The Michaelmas Daisies, among dede weeds,
Blooms for S. Michael's valourous deeds ;
And seems the last of floures that stode,
Till the feste of S. Simon and S. Jude—
Save Mushrooms, and the Fungus race,
That grow till All-Hallow-tide takes place.
Soon the evergreen Laurel alone is greene,
When Catherine crownes all learned menne,
The Ivie and Holly Berries are seen,
And Yule Log and Wassaile come round agen."

PEAR (*Pirus communis*).

a, blossom; *b*, section of same; *c*, *d*, sections of fruit.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MAGIC WAND.

MAGIC, sorcery, witchcraft, and kindred black arts have been more largely associated with plants both at home and abroad than we might at first sight be led to suppose. Take, as an illustration, the name by which a fortune-teller used to be known in Anglo-Saxon times—viz., *Tán-hlyta*. The word *hlyta* is connected with *hlot* (from which our present "lot" and "lottery" are derived), and *tán* means

"a twig." Hence a fortune-teller was one who divined or ascertained the *lot* of any one by means of *twigs*. Now our forefathers were not the only people who cast lots in this way. The Swedish *spå*, meaning to divine, foretell, or predict anything; *spåman*, a fortune-teller; and the Danish *spaae*, *spaamand*, and *spaakonst*, all seem to be connected with *spö*, a twig or rod; but whether this be so or not, in the far East the custom of divining by sticks and straws, and leaves and flowers exists to this day. We find in the Chinese language a word pronounced *Leh* or *Lak*, respecting which the dictionaries give us the following information: "*Leh* means to divine with fifty straws between the fingers. They are reduced to forty-nine, and divided into two parcels at hazard, from one of which a straw is taken and put by the little finger, and four others then selected to put with it; the remainder of the parcel is then divided in the same manner on the other hand, and the length of the two compared with the sixty-four diagrams to ascertain the luck."

As this explanation will not be very intelligible to some readers, we may perhaps quote the words of another Chinese scholar, who gives the following explanation from an old Chinese work of great authority:—"The round number of straws employed is fifty, but it is usual to employ only forty-nine, which are divided into two parts to represent the dual system of philosophy. A sprig of some plant is then placed between the fourth and little finger, to represent the three powers, as heaven, earth, and man are called; and lastly, the straws are taken in fours to represent the four seasons," thus keeping up the system of numbers which enters so largely and mysteriously into Eastern systems of philosophy. This having been done, certain movements take place, and the magician then proceeds to his divination. M. de Gubernatis has called attention to this system of using plants for magical purposes, and shows how, "from the West to the extreme East, from Europe

to Asia, the same superstition is propagated " by the same peculiar and mystic method of divination.[1]

Besides this method of divination we find that known by the name of the Sixty Sticks of Fate. This consists in taking a number of bamboo slips, and placing them in a round box without a lid, like a spill stand, and then shaking them in such a manner as to allow one, and only one, of the slips to fall out. On the end of each slip is an index-word or sign, by means of which the book of Answers may be consulted. The sign on the slip which falls out is compared with the index in the book of Answers, and when the corresponding sign is found there, the answer can be given. If two or more slips were to fall out, of course no answer could be given, as the priest would not know which of the slips to take, just as in a lottery one cannot take out more than one paper having a winning number. And yet once more we shall find a word *Shi* or *Shai*, meaning to divine with slips of Milfoil. In this case the plants growing on the grave of Confucius are the most efficacious! Imagine any one in England, anxious to know his fortune, going to the grave of one of the saints, and gathering twigs from the plant growing there, in order to divine his lot! Yet a few years ago this very thing used to be done in such an enlightened land as ours.

At the present day, although we may have entirely forgotten the origin of the customs, we yet find remnants of the old superstition about divining by twigs still living on in various places under various forms. The mode which is still adopted by the hop-pickers in Kent and Sussex, for ascertaining where they shall stand to pick, is a case in point. The master, or some person acting for him, cuts as many slips of hop-bine or hazel-twig as there may be " bins " in the garden. On these he cuts notches from one upwards, and then each person comes and draws his or her " standing." Again the habit of swilling round the tea-leaves left in the

cup after tea, and reading fortunes by the appearance of the leaves after the cup has been inverted and left awhile to dry, is another instance of the same thing. It is not many years since an intelligent person in the south of England told me that she was acquainted with an old woman who told fortunes in this way, and that she had tried the skill of the old fortune-teller by allowing her to read the signs in her tea-cup. The old woman read the following story:—"You will shortly go to stay in the country, at a farm-house, where plenty of turkeys and fowls are kept, and where the farmer is dead, but his widow is now living." Strange to say, the prediction came true, for, quite unexpectedly, my informant went to stay at a farm which in every way answered the description of the old woman, which farm was kept by my own grandmother, and remains in the hands of the same family still, though my grandfather and grandmother have both passed away. Let it be granted, then, that plants, twigs, and flowers have been in the past largely used for magical purposes; we will now try to trace some particular instances.

Everyone has heard of the Evil Eye; and traces of the belief of our forefathers in this silly fallacy still exist. I have often noticed in Eastern lands how the people have hid their little ones behind their dress as the foreigner passes them, lest he should injure them by his glance; and it is only a very few years since a clergyman stated that it was his firm conviction that many of the Cornish people believed still in the *Mal Occhio*, as the Italians call the Evil Eye. You will not now be surprised that one of our commonest flowers, the Periwinkle, used to be called Sorcerer's Violet, on account of its being a favourite flower with "wise folk" (as wizards and witches were called) for making charms. This flower is called by the Italians *Centocchio*, or Hundred Eyes; whilst the French knew it under the name of *Violette des Sorciers*, because they considered it one of the plants which assisted the

sorcerers, in their pretended magical operations. Perhaps the English name Sorcerer's Violet was but a translation of the French; but it is more than probable that our own people held the same belief respecting the flower as the French themselves. At any rate, this idea is confirmed by the fact that an old writer says "the leaves of the Periwinkle eaten by man and wife do cause them to love each other." If this be true, O lovers of flowers, and lovers of human kind, pray grow them and scatter them freely everywhere, to save your fellow-creatures from their too frequent domestic broils!

Among the Turks, Greeks, Chinese, Japanese, and others, Garlic is employed for the purpose of warding off the Evil Eye and other misfortunes.

Readers of the "Faerie Queen" will know that Spenser makes frequent reference to the magical employment of herbs and flowers. Thus in Book I., canto ii., l. 42, we read:—

> "The hatefull hag by chaunges of my cheare
> Perceiv'd my thought, and, drownd in sleepie night,
> With wicked herbes and ointments did besmeare
> My body all, through charmes and magicke might,
> That all my senses were bereaved quight."

From the same writer we learn that the magician was quite as necessary a person in cases of extreme illness as the doctor himself —a state of things exactly like that which we find in China and the East to-day. Where medicine failed, the aid of magic would often be called in. Thus Spenser once more:

> "Beseeching him with prayer, and with praise,
> If either salves or oyles, or herbes, or charmes,
> A for donne wight from dore of death mote raise,
> He would at her request prolong her nephew's daies."

Herbs, too, were employed in the preparation of the bath in which,

every spring, or *prime*, as Spenser has it, witches were supposed to purify themselves:

> "Till on a day (that day is every prime,
> When witches wont do penance for their crime)
> I chaunst to see her in her proper hew,
> Bathing herself in origane and thyme."

Old Gerarde says: "Organie healeth scabs, itchings, and scurvinesse, being used in bathes." It is perhaps as well here to observe that though origane, organie, organy, or organ, as the word is variously spelt and pronounced, comes from the classical languages (Latin *origanum*), and refers to the plant Marjoram, yet in Devonshire, when the people speak of organs, organ-tea, organ-broth, they mean Pennyroyal.

Elsewhere Spenser exclaims:—

> "O who can tell
> The hidden powre of herbes, and might of magick spell!"

Honesty (only it was not known by that name, which would scarcely be seemly in such a connection) was also used in a magical way, accompanied by incantations. It is mentioned by Chaucer, under the name of Lunarie, in connection with other magic herbs, in the following lines:—

> "And herbes coude I tell eke many on,
> As egremaine, valerian, and lunarie,
> And other swiche, if that me list to tarie.
> Our lampes brening bothe night and day,
> To bring about our craft if that we may,
> Our journies eke of calcination,
> And of waters albification."

Speaking of this plant Honesty, or Lunarie (*Lunaria*), an old writer racily remarks: "This plant, which is now solely cultivated for the beauty of its lilac corollas, and the singularity of its seed vessels, was held in high repute among the credulous of former

ages, being considered a charming, enchanting, and bewitching herb. It still continues to give a 'charming' effect to the gardens, but its mysterious powers are no longer known, for it has shared the fate of numerous other magical plants, which enabled the people of old to transform themselves into aërial beings, or even to travel through the air in their natural shapes. We read of numerous plants whereby it was said that love or hatred was engendered, lost property recovered, men's bosoms unlocked and their secrets sucked out, and by whose aid battles were won and lost, and even the dead brought to life." Thus Drayton says :—

> "Enchanting Lunarie here lies,
> In sorceries excelling."

History supplies us with many authentic confirmations of the statements we have made, showing us that ideas of the magic efficacy of plants and flowers actually occupied the minds of men very largely in earlier times; whilst, as already stated, our own names of plants and traditional usages confirm the same. Roman poets reveal to us the popular superstitions of their times, upon which they laid hold in order to give popularity and piquancy to their compositions. Thus in Dryden's "Virgil" we read how

> "Circe had long lov'd the youth in vain,
> Till love, refus'd, converted to disdain;
> Then mixing pow'rful herbs, with magic art,
> She chang'd his form, who could not change his heart."

There is no shrub or tree, perhaps, which has a brighter look, or produces a prettier effect, than the Rowan. Among the Scotch this is a regular favourite. In the north it bears the name of Ran or Royne, and by the Danes and Swedes is known as Rönu or Runn. By some the name is supposed to refer to the roan-coloured bark with which the stem and branches are

covered; but others prefer to connect it with the Scandinavian word *Runa*, a rune or charm. Our Scottish neighbours hold, according to Dr. Jamieson, that "the most approved charm against cantrips (magic) and spells was a branch of the Rowan-tree planted and placed over the byre (cowhouse or dwelling). This sacred tree cannot be removed by unholy fingers." For

> "Roan-tree and red thread,
> Haud the witches a' in dread."

Most writers have been at a loss to account for the feeling entertained by many people towards the Rowan; but we think that the secret is contained in the lines just quoted. The Rowan-tree is joined with *red* thread (no other colour would do), on account of its red berries. All over the world we find the same regard for things of a red colour. In China charms are tied with red string, written on red paper, or printed with red ink. Visiting cards are always red; red silk is tied around the infant's wrist; and young and old alike regard red as the very best safeguard against witchcraft or evil spirits. It is so elsewhere, for in Esthonia, we are told, the mothers tie red thread in their babies' cradles, and in the isles of the Polynesian Archipelago red feathers are special favourites, and are regarded as specially fit for kings and noted persons, on account of their bright colour. Among the Highlanders red thread is tied round the tails of the cattle before they are sent out to pasture in spring, and the women keep off witches from their persons by tying red silk round their own fingers. As all know, the robin is regarded by many as a kind of sacred bird, and many are the curious tales told in connection with its red breast. It is probable that it was this very peculiarity which led to its being thus singled out in early times from other birds as an object of reverence and worship. And so with the Rowan, whose

bright red berries would be sure to command attention. This idea finds confirmation in the fact that the Holly, another red berry-bearing tree, is specially employed at Christmas time as the fittest decoration for cottage and church. "From the exceeding beauty of their berries" (says Farrer), "the Rowan and the Elder and the Thorn (and the Holly) would naturally impress the savage mind with the feelings of actual divinity." Elsewhere I have given some other remarks of this writer on the magic character of the Rowan, which may be compared with what has here been said about that tree.[2]

Another plant which has been largely employed for magical purposes is the St. John's Wort. This plant used to be gathered on the eve of St. John's day, June 24th, and hung up near the door or windows as a preservative against evil spirits, thunder and other much-dreaded ills. It is said that the custom of gathering it as a preservative against thunder is still observed with great ceremony on St. John's Eve by the peasantry in some parts of France and Germany; while the Scotch formerly carried it about their persons as a charm against witchcraft. The plant was at one time in great repute for its supposed influence in conjurations and enchantments, as we learn from the fact that it used to be called *Fuga dæmonum* (or, as we might say in English, "Scare-devil!"). In some places it was customary to burn the plant, the smoke and flame being supposed to possess special efficacy against various forms of evil. The name *Hypericum*, by which the St. John's Wort is known among botanists, is an additional testimony to the fact that it was regarded as possessing magic properties over evil spirits, for that name comes from a Greek word, meaning "to hold over in such a way as to protect from anything"; while others named the plant *Sol Terrestis*, or Terrestrial Sun, for (said they) just as the spirits of darkness fly before the light of the solar orb, so do

evil spirits fly at sight of this. Gentle maidens even used to divine by means of this plant in olden times, whilst the Germans gave it the names Jägeteufel and Teufelsflucht, on account of the devil-scaring properties it possessed. Thus it would appear that the whole of Europe has been more or less influenced by this popular belief, and we are reminded of the customs of the Chinese and Japanese, who to the present day guard their homes from evil spirits and witchcraft by suspending bunches of herbs and magic plants over the door. It is not in China alone that the Celestials observe this custom, for in the Colonies whither they have emigrated, they still keep it up, and a scrap of Sago-palm leaf, of Sweet-flag, or of Moxa, will effectually prevent the entrance of uncanny creatures into the house thus protected. At the new year the Cantonese clean out their houses, and post near the doors a pair of scrolls made of red paper (the lucky colour) bearing some such inscription as the following, which I copied from a house some time ago when living in the city :—

1. *Chéung pò tsz kim châm tsín tsè :*

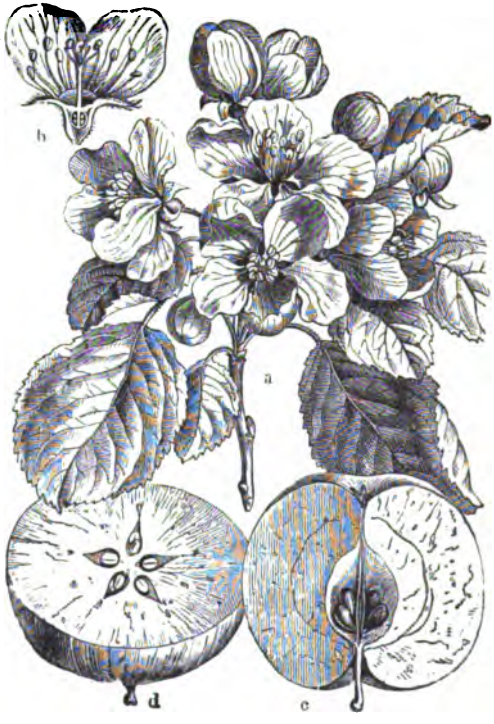
" The Sweet-flag, like a sword, destroys a thousand evil influences."

2. *Ngâi tp ü ká chín pák fuk :*

" Leaves of the Moxa, like a banner, procure a hundred blessings."

Just as the Tartar doctor, when he has not the requisite herbs at hand, writes their names on a piece of paper and directs the patient to burn it and drink the ashes in tea, relying on the efficacy of the name to work the cure, so the Chinaman writes the name of his magic herbs upon magic paper, and thus produces the same magic effect. It will be noticed that the St. John's Wort is often joined with other herbs to produce the required

effect, for an old writer says: "On the vigil of St. John the Baptist every man's house is shadowed with green Birch, long Fennel, St. John's Wort, Orpin, White Lilies, and suchlike." I have written a good deal respecting some of these plants in other chapters, and as there is still so much to say about other flowers and plants I shall be forgiven perhaps if I here give such noted flowers as St. John's Wort but scanty notice. I wish, as far as possible, to avoid repetition, though some of the facts respecting these plants find their proper place at times under more than one head.[3] Many are the plants used in love divination. Sometimes the anxious damsel would pluck the petals of the Poppy and strip it, remarking the force with which it snapped. In many places Apples are believed to be capable of telling love-fortunes. The customs of throwing the peel of an Apple over the head, and judging whether single blessedness or the married state awaits the person in the future is very old, and still well known in England. Some read in the shape of the peel, as it falls on the ground, the initial letter of the future



APPLE (*Pyrus Malus*).

a, blossom; *b*, section of same; *c*, *d*, sections of fruit.

sweetheart's name. The German peasantry shoot an Apple-pip from the fingers on New Year's night, at the same time uttering a prayer, and watching the direction taken by the seed. The sweetheart may be looked for from the same direction. In Austria, we are told that on St. Thomas's night an Apple is cut in two, and the seeds in each half carefully counted. If they are even, a marriage will soon follow; if one of the seeds should have been cut in two, the course of love will not be smooth. Perhaps, however, this is not to be altogether regretted, if the old adage that "true love never runs smoothly" be true. If two be cut it indicates coming widowhood. Something similar to this is found in the custom, common still among our young people, of counting the seeds of the same fruit, or sticking them on the forehead, to see which will remain longest in position. On the Continent this fruit is very largely employed for these purposes by the superstitious, although, as among ourselves, the customs are now rapidly dying out. In Bohemia the Onion is used for fortune-telling. If hung up in a room, it draws to itself maladies that would otherwise fall on the inmates. Chives, like Garlic, protect against the Evil Eye, and ward off other misfortunes. The Peony derives its Latin name (*Pæonia*) from Pæon, a celebrated physician, or as some say a god of physic, and supposed to be the same as Apollo. He cured the gods of their diseases, and healed their wounds by means of its root. This plant was supposed by our ancestors to be possessed of strange and magical powers. It drove away tempests, dispelled enchantments, and cured epilepsy. Certain ceremonies must needs be observed, however, before it could be used as a medicine. The patient must not taste the root of the Peony if a woodpecker were in sight, for if he did so he would be sure to be stricken with blindness! Nor must the plant be used except at a certain hour of the night, and when the moon was in a

given phase. These rules being strictly observed there is no saying what could not be done by means of this magic plant. The Mistletoe may well be regarded with something like reverence. It was a branch of this plant which slew the god Baldur, of whom we read in Norse mythology. Frigga had taken an oath of all created things that they would never be employed for the injury of this best of gods; but she had overlooked "one little shoot that groweth east of Walhalla, so small and feeble, that she forgot to take its oath." The feeble shoot thus forgotten was put into the hands of a blind god by Loki, and whilst the other gods were amusing themselves by flinging at Baldur the various things that had taken the oath, Hodur flung the Mistletoe dart, which pierced Baldur that he fell to the ground. The myth is very interesting, but it is not our duty here to give its interpretation. Everyone knows that it used to be customary to give names and legends to swords in the olden time, and in commemoration of this event more than one sword borne by the champions of the North has been named Mistelteinn (*i.e.*, Mistletoe) by its owner.[4] It was customary, we are told, to cut down the Mistletoe with a golden hook, the branch so cut being specially virtuous in use against poisons and other evils.

I have already given both Pixy and Puck their due share of attention, but they, like the witches of which we have yet to speak, are so intimately associated with the various branches of flower-lore, that it would be impossible to treat of magic plants without calling in their assistance. It is well known that one cannot always draw the line between the one and the other class of sprites and spectres who bear the various names of fairy, puck, devil, pixy, and the like; for sometimes they are good-natured, at other times evil-disposed, and a fairy by an evil action may well be regarded as a confederate of Puck, while

by a good deed it may be raised to the level of the gods. The Paris or fairies so well known to the readers of modern Persian poetry, are, as Haug has remarked, regarded as evil spirits in the earlier writings of the same people, because they seduce men by their beauty. Those who read Moore will recognize the Paris under the name of Peri. "For the most part, the plants and trees which have been affected by the fairies take us" (says Mr. King) "into the wild and romantic places which the good neighbours were themselves believed chiefly to frequent. Yet it is remarkable that many of the plants which we should naturally expect to find thus selected are almost unnoticed in folk-lore or tradition. The golden Furze, the glory of English commons, is, so far as we know, absolutely without record in any folk-lore; and even the Heather itself, although from its covering their moors and mosses it has a certain obscure connection with elves and pixies, is without any definite story or tradition. It can hardly have been the wide diffusion, and great abundance of these plants, which kept them from a place in general folk-lore, since the ferns—their companions on the breezy upland, in the depths of the wood, or in the rocky mountain glen—are distinguished by an unusual amount of such tradition. The root of the common Bracken, cut across, not only displays the figure of an Oak-tree, but foretells by its marking much that is of special interest to the investigator, always supposing that he has the power to read them aright. But it is on the Eve of St. John, when all the hosts of elf-land are abroad in greatest power, that the Fern becomes most mysterious. It then puts forth, at dusk, a small blue flower, which soon disappears; and the wonderful seed, quickly ripening, falls from the plant at midnight."

To record all that has been written of the magic fern-seed would be impossible, but while I have supplied in the notes a

number of references, I will here give some few of the remarks made by early and modern writers respecting it. To begin with our own Shakspere, in one place (1st Henry IV. ii. i.), *Gadshill* remarks: "We have the receipt of fern-seed—we walk invisible." To which *Chamberlain* replies: "Now, by my faith, I think you are more beholden to the night than to fern-seed for your walking invisible." One of the most racy pieces I have read respecting this superstition occurs in a little French work recently published, and runs something as follows:—"In the charming work entitled "Course dans la Gruyère," by Mons. Charles of Riaz, one may find on p. 27 the following note: 'People everywhere have their superstitions. One of these, which is found in La Haute-Gruyère, is the supposition that if a man should find himself exactly at midnight in a spot covered with ferns where neither speech nor sound of any kind can be heard, Puck will appear and hand him a purse of gold; and this is what people call *watching the fern*.' This note by the learned author is very short, and in endeavouring to develop the matter somewhat, I believe I shall be rendering myself useful to many poor people who desire to give an early death-blow to their poverty. But, mark you, these lines are not written for feeble-minded folk, or such as easily take fright; rather let the courageous and intrepid, those who have nothing to lose and all to gain, take heart; for these directions are for such as fear neither the devil nor his horns. If you ask me whether I have ever been in search of the treasure myself, I must confess that I have not, but I have a cousin who once did so, and as he related the whole matter to me, I can speak pertinently, and with confidence. There is only one night in the whole year which is favourable for watching the fern; that is the Eve of St. John. On the 24th of June, then, in the evening, taking your life in your hand, you set out alone—mark that, quite alone. The night is dark, the wind moans in the old

fir trees which line the path, and strange noises are heard amid the sombre foliage and the brushwood growing on either side. But forward! This is not the time for fear, the treasure is to be gained! Do you see those two flaming eyes which are fixed upon you, or can you hear the hideous cries which come from the melancholy depths of the wood? They come from the envoy which the spectre of night has sent to greet you and help you on your way. If their form, appearance, and noises are fantastic, this is quite in harmony with the place and time. During such a night, in the depths of the forest, where lugubrious noises re-echo in the deserted corners of the hills, you may perhaps be somewhat disturbed with feelings of fear, but forward! Pursue your object courageously! But what monster is that which comes to obstruct the way, and prevent your progress? It is a gigantic serpent, whose tongue darts out fire, and it is bent on your hurt, but forward! for the moment is fast drawing near at which alone you can gain your desired end. The terrible hour has arrived; the earth trembles under your feet, the mountains shake, the trees dance around you. The being you see yonder is advancing; he rides a black horse, whose prancing and jumping becomes more and more distinct—here he comes! I cannot proceed, for fear seizes me as I try to narrate what follows. When he comes quite up to you, put on a bold front; speak with some audacity, and you will be able to extort from him a larger sum. After your perilous expedition hasten home with all celerity, close your door and bolt it securely, lest any one should come and rob you of your treasure. Then open the bag; and if you do not find it full of gold, the devil at least will be concealed there!"

As the fern-seed falls, it must be carefully caught in a white napkin, and the elves will no doubt whisk about the ears of the person who is employed in catching it, as Aubrey tells us they did in his day about the ears of one who undertook the adventure.

We find the superstition in Russia, where, during the night which precedes St. John's Day, people go out in search of the flower of the Paporót or Fern. It is believed there also that it flowers only on this particular night exactly at midnight, and that the happy mortal who shall be present at the time will be able to accomplish all he may wish. This mysterious plant possesses, along with the Hazel, of which we have soon to speak, the power of discovering treasures hid in the bowels of the earth. The same superstition, which in Ireland centres in the four-leaved Shamrock, is found in Germany. In the Tyrol and Bohemia it is said that on St. John's Eve the fern-seeds shine like fiery gold. In early times the seed was known as "wish-seed," and any one who carried it about would be able to discover treasures, which would reveal themselves in veins of bluish flame in the earth where the fern-seeds were scattered. The sap of the plant was said to confer upon the person who partook of the ambrosial draught the blessing of eternal youth. In some places, as already indicated, these seeds are under the protection, and in the keeping of Satan; one must therefore prepare for the search by abstaining from attending a place of worship during Epiphany, and fixing the thought as much as possible upon the unearthly donor. The seeker sometimes takes his stand at a cross-road where a corpse has passed (for some unpleasant or impossible act must always be performed); ghosts and demons here swarm about, and provoke the passenger to laughter, or make him speak. He who speaks is torn to pieces by the devil; he who passes on without giving the least heed to their pranks gains his end, and is rewarded. There is a curious reference to the old belief in Dean Jackson's works. He wrote in the seventeenth century, and the passage may be worth quoting. He says: "It was my hap, since I undertook the ministry, to question an ignorant soul (whom, by undoubted report, I had known to have been seduced by a teacher of

unhallowed arts to make a dangerous experiment) what he saw or heard when he watched the falling of the fern-seed at an unseasonable and suspicious hour. 'Why,' quoth he, fearing (as his brief reply occasioned me to conjecture) lest I should press him to tell before company what he had voluntarily confessed unto a friend in secret some fourteen years before, 'do you think that the devil hath aught to do with that good seed? No; it is in the keeping of the King of Fayries, and he, I know, will do me no harm, although I should watch it again.' Yet had he utterly forgotten this king's name, upon whose kindness he so presumed, until I remembered it unto him out of my reading in *Huon of Bordeaux*." The ignorant man now proposed a riddle to the Dean which was intended to show that an "Angel did foretell John Baptist should be born at that very instant in which the fern-seed, at other times invisible, did fall, intimating, further (as far as I could then perceive), that this saint of God had some extraordinary virtue from the time or circumstance of his birth."[5] A plant which can render invisible, discover hid treasure, preserve the person from harm, and reveal a sacred oak or cross, surely is not to be despised, and people have not always been of the same mind as Lyte, who in 1587 declared that "to say the trueth it is nothing els but trumperie and superstition." In a former chapter I spoke of the Rowan, and here we must give it another glance, since it is one of the plants which compose the Magic Wand. "Less famous, perhaps, than the Fern, but almost as mysterious in its direct connection with the elfin-races, is the Mountain-Ash or Rowan; and into what lovely places—what wild, healthy coppices—what solitary hollows of the moorland—its very name takes us! As we write there rises before us a half-wooded glen on the skirts of Dartmoor, where the hill-stream descends from ledge to ledge in a succession of falls, filling all the place with its wild music. At the foot of one of the larger water-

falls rises a Mountain-Ash of great age and size; its clusters of scarlet berries sparkling in the gleams of sunlight that sweep across, and forming an admirable foreground to the grey, lichen-tinted rocks, and the patches of oaken coppice and underwood with which the steep sides of the glen are lined. It is completely Wordsworth's picture:

> "'The pool
> Glows at her feet, and all the gloomy rocks
> Are brightened round her.'

"No more perfect trysting-places for the pixies could possibly be imagined; and they were accordingly often seen in old times, says tradition, under the branches of their favourite tree—a certain proof that the pixies are, after all, of no evil nature. For the Rowan is the especial property of the 'light' elves; and crosses made from its wood, or sprays of its leaves hung from the rafters, will prevent any evil creature from entering the house or the cattle-sheds. In the old north the tree was called 'Thor's helper.' At Modrufell, on the north coast of Iceland, is, or was, a large Rowan, always on Christmas Eve stuck full of torches, which no wind could possibly extinguish; and one of the Orkneys possessed a still more mysterious tree, with which the fate of the island was bound up, since, if a leaf was carried away, the Orkneys would pass to some foreign lord. Veneration for the Mountain-Ash, however, was by no means confined to the Scandinavian north. Many a Welsh churchyard had its ancient Rowan, taking the place of the Yew-tree in England; and small crosses made from its wood were solemnly distributed on certain festivals, as a protection from evil spirits." Mr. King, from whose interesting essay on "Sacred Trees and Flowers" I have taken this extract, might have added a great deal to what he has here said about the mystic Rowan-tree, and especially noteworthy is the place it occupies in the folklore of Scotland. To this subject I shall have to call attention

when speaking of plants in their relation to witches, so that it will be well now to leave this wonderful tree, and pass on to another.

Among the ancient Greeks we find a species of magic or divination under the name of rhabdomancy, or divination by means of a rod. This branch of the black arts exists to-day in China and other Eastern countries, it was known to the Romans, and is said by some even yet to live on, though it is fast expiring in England. For this purpose many kinds of plants or trees have been employed. Some, like the Chinese, made use of fruit-trees, as the Peach; others employed Osier rods; Blackthorn has been used by some; but Hazel has ever been the favourite wood. The shape of the rod is similar to that of the letter Y, and when in operation the hands usually grasp each of the diverging arms, and allow the unforked part to point outwards. Elder must not be employed; at any rate it used to be supposed by some that that wood was incapable of indicating the presence of metal or water. It has recently been asserted that the rod is still slyly employed in Cornwall, although, if questioned about it, the people would deny all knowledge of such a thing; but it cannot be doubted that it was once commonly resorted to by the miners; while in Wiltshire and elsewhere it was recently used for detecting water. It must be cut at a particular time, as, for example on Midsummer night, or when the stars are in a peculiarly favourable condition. Writing respecting this *Virgula divina*, as the divining rod used to be called, my friend Mr. Jones remarks: "In cutting it, one must face the east, so that the rod shall be one which catches the first rays of the morning sun, or, as some say, the eastern and western sun must shine through the fork of the rod, otherwise it will be good for nothing." It is strange that in China exactly similar beliefs prevail respecting the rod cut from the Peach-tree. Among the Hindus also, even in the time of the Vedas, similar

instructions were given respecting the *çami* branch, and the *arani*. Some directed that the branches must be cut at new moon, which agrees with the Chinese custom of cutting branches from the magic peach-tree on the night before the new year, which always commences with the first new moon after the winter solstice. The divining rod was known under a great variety of names, the most usual word for it in Germany being the "wishing rod." As the Blackthorn furnished the material from which to make this magic instrument it was often called "wishing thorn." It will be impossible to give a full account of the many virtues possessed by this rod, or to relate the various superstitions respecting its use, the method of procuring and preparing it, and other details: I will therefore briefly sum up one or two of the principal facts. In Prussia the Hazel rod is cut in spring, and when the first thunder comes a cross is made with it over every heap of grain, in the belief that the corn may thus be kept good for many years. In Bohemia fever is cured by means of the rod, which must be bought without any bargaining or beating down; he who takes the rod away will have the fever, which he may dispel by breaking the stick into three pieces.

"Some sorcerers do boast they have a rod,
Gather'd with vowes and sacrifice,
And (borne about) will strangely nod
To bidden treasure where it lies;
Mankind is (sure) that rod divine,
For to the wealthiest (ever) they incline."

Brand, whose works I have not quoted in the notes, tells us that a twig of Apple-tree would do as well as Hazel, and must be of twelve months' growth. The seven son of a seventh son would be the most successful person to use the rod. The same writer tells us that an Ash-tree bough used also to be regarded superstitiously by the people in some parts of England, and adds: "Seven or

eight years ago I remember to have seen one of these, which I thought extremely beautiful and curious, in the house of an old woman at Beeralston, in Devonshire, of whom I would most gladly have purchased it, but she declined parting with it on any account, thinking it would be unlucky to do so." As a fit conclusion to these notices of the Magic Wand, I may again quote the words of Mr. King. "Lord Lytton has suggested" (he says) "in his 'Strange Story,' that the wood of certain trees to which magical properties are ascribed, may in truth possess virtues little understood, and deserving of careful investigation. The Rowan would take its place among these, as would the common Hazel, from which the miner's divining rod is always (or rather, mostly) cut. The use of this *baguette divinatoire*, as it is called by Vallemont, who towards the end of the seventeenth century wrote an elaborate treatise on it, was by no means confined to the search for veins of metal, or for water. It assisted in the pursuit of criminals (as Mr. Baring-Gould has related); and Vallemont gives the 'surprising story of a countryman, who, guided by his rod, pursued a murderer by land for a distance exceeding forty-five leagues, besides thirty leagues more by water.' The Hazel is so far connected with the elves that, according to the Cornish miners, the rod is guided to the mine by pixies,—for all the treasures of the earth are in their keeping,—and many a rich lode has been discovered by the songs of the small people heard on the moors at nightfall. In some parts of Germany the call of the cuckoo is thought to disclose mines; and certain plants—the Cuckoo's-Bread, and the Cuckoo-Flower (the large purple Orchis very common in England)—are believed to grow in most luxuriance where the depths of the earth are rich in metal." Magic plants are thus seen to be closely associated with beings which sometimes possess an uncanny power, at other times delight in showing a favour. The Rose used to be regarded as being under the special protection of elves, dwarfs, and

fairies, who were ruled by the lord of the Rose-garden. The name of this King was Laurin.*

" Four portals to the garden lead, and when the gates are closed,
No living wight dare touch a Rose, 'gainst his strict command opposed;
Whoe'er would break the golden gates, or cut the silken thread,
Or who would dare to crush the flowers down beneath his tread,
Soon for his pride would leave to pledge a foot and hand;
Thus Laurin, King of Dwarfs, rules within his land."

Such being the case, we shall not marvel if we hear that in some parts of Germany the damsel who has several lovers uses the Rose to divine which one will be true. To do this she takes some Rose-leaves and names them after her lovers, then casts them into water. The leaf which is the last to be overpowered and sink is that of the young suitor who will become her husband. Elsewhere the "Rose-apple" is carried by the maiden in her breast, to keep her lover true, while the English lass used to divine by the Rose-bud who would be her Valentine. The Everlasting (*Gnaphalium*) is another magic plant, and is still gathered on the Continent on Ascension Day to be hung over the door of the stable, shed, or dwelling-house as a charm against lightning and other evils. The Swiss said it had the power of rendering invisible, and was used for wreaths on Ascension Day; while in Swabia, if one pulls up the plant at a given phase of the moon, and folds it in a white cloth, he will be rendered bullet-proof by wearing it in his breast.

What an amount of folklore centres in the Clover, Trefoil, or Shamrock! The Common Clover, which was used in the festivals of the ancient Greeks, was regarded as sacred by the Germans and others, when it had two or four leaves. Thus the person who carries a leaf of the four-leaved or cruciform Clover about with him will be successful at play, and have the power of detecting

* See Wagner and Anson's "Epics and Romances of the Middle Ages," pages 173—184.

the presence of evil spirits. The lover may put it under his pillow, and he will dream of his beloved, or the maiden may, by slipping a leaf into her lover's shoe without his knowledge, as he is about to set out on a journey, secure his sure and safe return to her embrace. It may be employed to prevent the wearer being drawn into military service, and is said to cure diseases and lunacy. Shakspere says:

> "I will enchant the old Andronicus
> With words more sweet and yet more dangerous
> Than baits to fish or Honeystalks to sheep,
> When, as the one is wounded with the bait,
> The other rotted with delicious food."

It is generally supposed that the Honeystalks on which the sheep delight to feed are Clover flowers. The Shamrock, or at least the plant which now usually bears that name, is a species of Clover or Trefoil, and among the Irish is still regarded as a magical, one might almost say a sacred, plant.

The flowers of the Horse-knop (*Centaurea nigra*) or Knap-weed, and of the Plantain, better known as Soldiers or Fighting-cocks, are also used in divination. The following lines will set the matter forth with sufficient clearness, and will obviate the necessity of going further into detail:

> "Or, trying by simple charms and spells,
> Which rural superstition tells,
> They pull the little blossom threads
> From out the Knot-weed's button-beads;
> And put the husk with many a smile
> In their white bosoms for a while.
> Then if they guess aright the swain
> Their love's sweet fancies try to gain,
> 'Tis said that ere it lies an hour
> 'Twill blossom with a second flower,
> And from the bosom's handkerchief
> Bloom, as it ne'er had lost a leaf."

Holly, the smooth Ash leaf, and Yarrow are plants which have been largely used in divination of this kind. Red Sage will also afford a sight of one's future husband. "On Midsummer's Eve, just at sunset, three, five, or seven, young women are to go into a garden in which there is no other person, and each gather a sprig of Red Sage. Then going into a room by themselves, they must set a stool in the middle of the room, and on it a clean basin full of Rose-water, into which the sprigs of sage are to be put." When certain other operations have been gone through, it is thought that the lover of each will appear at midnight. But there is so much similarity in all these stupid sayings that I will now turn from them. The reader will be able to find abundance of information in such works on folklore as Henderson, Jones, and various other writers have supplied. On the Continent, perhaps more than in England, the Daisy, and other flowers of a similar shape and appearance, have long been regarded as magical; and it is not long since people of respectable position placed great faith in their prognostications. The fancy of men seems to be guided by no fixed rules, for if we seem to see in the red berries of a tree or the star-shaped flowers of a plant the source of its mysterious power, what shall we say of such plants and flowers as present no such peculiarity? People have attributed magic powers to plants for very various reasons. One plant claims the distinction because its leaves are formed like a cross, another because it is under the special protection and control of a fairy or spectre. One flower charms by its shape, another by its colour, and a third by its scent; and so it has come to pass that there is scarcely a plant which does not possess some magic property or other; though some, through their long association with the weal and woe of our race, have gained greater distinction than others.

Jugglers were wont in former times to predict events and tell fortunes by means of the awn of the Wild Oat (*Avena fatua*). These awns are very susceptible of change of temperature or

moisture, and if placed in a damp hand or breathed upon will instantly wriggle and move about. To cover the cheat, the magician called his magic plant the leg of an Arabian spider, or the leg of an enchanted fly, and many people were deceived by its use.

There is one other plant to which I must call attention; and with a notice of this magic herb I will bring the present chapter to a close. Who has not heard of the Mandrake? If any of my readers have not made the acquaintance of this marvellous plant, it is not because it has been passed by unnoticed. The various treatises, books, and articles which refer to the Mandrake amount to an incredible number; and we are led to wonder how ever people could be so credulous as to believe much of the absolute nonsense which they evidently held in good faith respecting it. We read of the plant first in the Book of Genesis, where we are told (xxx. 14) that Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found Mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah. Among the early notices of the plant is that of Josephus, who gives an account of the custom as it was said to exist in Jewish villages of pulling it up by the root. In order to procure the magic plant it was necessary to cut away all the rootlets, which were very numerous, to the main root—to pull up which would cause death to any animal or creature that heard the screams it made. The only safe way to proceed to the difficult task, therefore, was to carefully stop the ears, then take a dog and tie its tail securely to the plant, and run away. When at a safe distance the dog must be called, to induce it to follow; in so doing it would pull up the much-coveted root, but would fall dead on the spot: It is to this superstition that Shakspere refers in *Romeo and Juliet:*

> "And shrieks like Mandrakes torn out of the earth,
> That living mortals hearing them run mad."

In another place the same writer refers to the notion, saying:

> "Would curses kill as doth the Mandrake's groan?"

Gerarde remarks that "there hath been many ridiculous tales brought up of this plant, whether of old wives or of some runagate surgeons or physicke-mongers I know not. They adde that it is never or very seldome to be found growing naturally but under a gallowes, where the matter that hath fallen from a dead body hath given it the shape of a man, with many other such doltish dreams. They fable further and affirme that he who would take up a plant thereof must tie a dog therunto to pull it up, which will give a great shreeke at the digging up, otherwise, if a man should do it, he should surely die in a short space after." Dr. Daubeney has published in his "Roman Husbandry" a very curious drawing of the fifth century, which represents the goddess of discovery presenting to Dioscórides the root of the Mandrake, in thoroughly human shape, which she had just pulled up; while the unfortunate dog which had been employed for the purpose is depicted in the agonies of death. Gerarde endeavoured to convince the credulous and superstitious of his time that they were being duped, and states that he and his servant had both frequently dug up the roots without receiving harm, or hearing any of the shrieks which it was pretended these roots sent forth. Dr Turner also wrote at considerable length in the time of Elizabeth and about thirty years before Gerarde, to show the folly of the tales which were generally told and believed. He says: "I have in my tyme at diverse tymes taken up the rootes of Mandrake out of the grounde, but I never saw any such thyng upon or in them, as are in and upon the pedler's rootes that are comenly to be solde in boxes." He adds that the plant "groweth not under gallosses, as a certayn doting doctor of Colon in hys physick lecture dyd tech hys auditores, neither doth it rise of the sede of man that falleth from hym that is hanged." The Romans appear to have been very superstitious in the manner of taking up this root, as Mr. Phillips has pointed out. Pliny says that those who under-

took this office paid particular attention to stand so that the wind was at their back, and before they began to dig, they made three circles around the plant with the point of a sword, and then turning to the west, proceeded to take it up. In later times, when the darkness of ignorance spread its wing over Europe, this plant and its substitutes, chiefly the Briony, formed a profitable article with the mountebank doctors of those superstitious days, when credulity was at a sufficient height to believe that this root was a preventive against mischief and dangers of every kind. With this belief the Germans formed little idols of the roots of the Mandrake, which were consulted as oracles, their repute being such that they were manufactured in great numbers and sold in cases. The plant, beside being known in Germany as *Mandragen* and *Galgenmännchen*, was also called Sorcerer's Root (*Zauberwurzel*) and Hag's-mannikin (*Hexenmännchen*); while the images prepared from it went by the names of Earth-Man (Erdmann) and Alraun. One writer (Matthiolus) tells us that Italian ladies in his time had been known to pay as much as twenty-five and thirty ducats in gold, or half-sovereigns, for one of these artificial charms; and he describes the way in which they were made—a process which has also been detailed in Lupton's "Notable Things." Gerarde says that "the idle drones that have little or nothing to do but eate and drinke, have bestowed some of their time in carving the roots of Brionie, forming them to the shape of men and women; which falsifying practice hath confirmed the errour amongst the simple and unlearned people, who have taken them upon their report to be the true Mandrakes." Coles also remarks about the Briony that "the root sometimes groweth to the bignesse of a childe of a yeere old, so that it hath been by some cut into the forme of a man, and called a Mandrake, being set againe into the earth." The images, as manufactured abroad, seem to have been brought over to England during the time of

Henry VIII., when they met with ready purchasers. Their vendors pretended that these magic roots had the power of increasing whatever money was placed near them, if some mystic words were also repeated; and to give greater importance to these pretended miracle workers it was stated that the roots from which they were made were produced from the flesh of criminals which fell from the gibbet, and that they only grew in such situations. Some even pretended that the plants grew only in one small spot in China, whence they were procured with the greatest risk and danger.

The root of the Mandrake is shaped like a Parsnip or Carrot and is often forked. Fanciful persons have thought that, when thus divided, it bears some resemblance to the legs of a man, and the crafty money-seekers of the past were not slow, as we have seen, at assisting the folly of the superstitious by artificially increasing the similitude, and then attributing to the plant supernatural powers. The Romans even called the Mandrake Semihomo, while the Greeks knew it as Anthropomorphon, both names indicating the human appearance. So late as 1810 the images already referred to were to be seen exposed for sale in several of the seaport towns of France, and they were frequently bought by such as wanted to have the passion of love excited, or to avoid disgrace in the domestic circle. Bits of the plant are still worn in Greece by young people as love-charms. A letter, written by a burgess of Leipzig, to his brother at Riga in 1675, has been preserved, says Mr. Conway, which shows the popular notions respecting the Mandrake at that time, and gives some of its popular names. It relates that the writer had heard of his brother and the sorrow and trouble he had been called upon to endure, and says that if he has a Mandrake, and brings it into the house he shall have good fortune. He has therefore paid sixty-four thalers for one, which he sends to his brother with these instruc-

tions: "When thou hast the Earth-Man in thy house, let it rest for three days without approaching it; then place it in warm water. With the water afterwards sprinkle the animals, the sills of the house, going over all, and soon it shall go better with thee, and thou shalt come to thy own if thou serve the Earth-Mannikin (or Mandrake) right. Bathe it four times every year, and as often wrap it in silk cloths and lay it among thy best things, and thou need do no more. The bath in which it hath been bathed is especially good." These illustrations will suffice to show the extent to which the folly of ignorant and credulous people has led them along the path of superstition, while they give us also a little insight into the craft of some who will be ever ready to take advantage of the credulity, fear, or superstitions of others for filling their own pockets with ill-gotten gains. It is pleasanter to deceive than to labour.

COTTON (*Gossypium herbaceum*).
a, plant; *b*, ovary with stigmas; *c*, burst capsule; *d*, seed.

CHAPTER X.

SUPERSTITIONS ABOUT FLOWERS.

A CERTAIN French lady of whom we have read was very superstitious in her notions respecting flowers. She had three nephews, one of whom she idolized; there was not a thing he wished for which he could not obtain from her. On one occasion he asked for some tame rabbits, and they were at once bought and placed in a hutch in the yard. The lad soon found it difficult to provide his new pets with the necessary provender, and resorted to strange experiments to supply

their wants. His aunt had laid by a large stock of Clover leaves of the lucky kind, which she had picked at various times during her walks. These had been placed between the leaves of her choicest books for security and to ensure good luck. One day Master William was looking through one of these books and came across a four-leaved Clover; soon another was found, and another. Happy thought! What capital food for the rabbits! So he turns out all the books, and gathers up the collection of choice leaves. These he carries to the hutch and casts ruthlessly to the dumb creatures there. How delighted they are with such a meal! They eat as though they knew the leaves were lucky. But one day the aunt is looking through her books, and misses a favourite leaf. Her suspicions are aroused, and she looks again. Another has gone, and yet another; why, there is not one left. What can be the explanation? Simply this—the fates have turned against her; she is destined to be for ever unlucky. This thought so preys upon her mind that she gradually becomes weak and helpless, and never recovers from the shock which her system sustained when she found that all her lucky leaves had flown!

One is almost inclined at first to disbelieve such a story; but as we proceed to the study of flower superstitions, we shall find that the hold which the popular belief in this branch of flower-lore has on the mind is such that results similar to that just recorded frequently follow. Good fortune has long and widely been believed to follow the person who finds a piece of Clover with four leaflets. The following couplet shows that the double-leaved Ash and green-topped Rush are equally lucky things to find:

"With a four-leaved Clover, a double-leaved Ash, and green-topped Seave,
You may go before the queen's daughter without asking leave."

In some parts of Cornwall the following charm used to be largely employed at one time for invoking good luck:

"Even Ash, I thee do pluck,
Hoping thus to meet good luck;
If no luck I get from thee,
I shall wish thee on the tree."

Not only is four-leaved Clover lucky, but a "Clover of two," or a piece with only two leaflets on one stem, is a charm for indicating a future lover. Rhymes respecting it, and others on the use of Yarrow, Onions, and many other plants, will be found in all the different works on folklore. "It is curious how many of these superstitions arose from isolated and trivial occurrences, the result of coincidence or chance, but which were considered as infallible and unmistakable omens of good or bad luck. If, for instance, a child fell sick after gathering a certain wild flower, or we will say, on Thursday, it was regarded as almost morally wrong for parents to allow their children henceforth even so much as to touch this flower of ill-omen. It may surprise us that our ancestors could ever have been credulous enough to believe that the events of their daily life were influenced by such childish fancies as are embodied in their folk-lore, worthy only of nursery-maids and other uneducated persons." Yet the fact remains, and is attested by the abundant information bearing on the subject that has been transmitted to us in old books and miscellaneous literature. Thus, Sir Thomas Browne, in his short treatise on the "Properties of Plants" wisely says: "We omit to recite the many virtues and endless faculties ascribed unto plants, which sometimes occur in grave and serious authors; and we shall make a bad transaction for truth to concede a verity in half."

Apart, however, from such allusions as are to be found in our own authors, antiquity is by no means destitute of references to the same subject. How firmly rooted the superstitions are, we may learn from the expressions which we still hear every day from the lips of our village children. In the autumn they will be

calling to one another when they find a double nut, "Lookey! I a' found a *lucky* nut." So in the hop-garden a branch which has been twisted and contorted in its growth is saved by the picker and carried home "for luck." I have seen lads cutting branches of Ash, which may often be found growing in a peculiar flattened form, and preserving them, under the impression that the person who possesses such a thing will have good luck. Any strange, monstrous, or unnatural formation in plant and flower seems to be regarded in this light; and as some plants are more liable to such freaks than others, this in part accounts for their notoriety.

HOPS (*Humulus Lupulus*).
a, plant; *b*, twig; *c*, fruit; *d*, anthers; *e*, *f*, stamens; *g*, *h*, nuts.

Many are the superstitions which associate flowers and plants with death. Some of these I have noted in another chapter. Thus the withering of the Bay-tree was a certain omen of death; and some two hundred years ago we find a writer on "Notable Things" remarking that, "If a Fir-tree be touched, withered, or burned with lightning, it signifies that the master or mistress thereof shall shortly dye." The same writer adds, "Neyther falling sicknes,

neyther devyll, wyll infest or hurt one in that place whereas a Bay-tree is. The Romans call it the Plant of the Good Angell." Shakspere refers to a popular superstition when he says:

> "'Tis thought the king is dead; we will not stay:
> The Bay-trees in our country are all withered."

It was esteemed a very bad omen when "In this yeare, in a manner throughout all the realme of England, old Bai-trees withered." As with the Cedar mentioned in another chapter, so with an old tree which in 1721 was still growing on the side of a fine spring, near the Castle of Dalhousie. This tree was very much observed by the country people, who gave out, as a writer of that period declares, that before any of the family died, a branch fell from the Edgewell Tree. The old tree some time ago fell all together, "but another sprang from the same root, which is now tall and flourishing; and lang be't sae!"

In Devonshire and other counties it is regarded as most unlucky to carry single flowers, such as a Primrose, Violet, Daffodil, Snowdrop, or other spring blossom into the house when they first come into season; and among Norfolk farmers the notion prevails that if any one should bring a bunch of Maiden-hair or Dudder-grass into the house, ill-luck would be sure to follow. Similarly the people in Dorsetshire commonly regard the plant Bergamot as ill-omened; and, if it be kept in a house sickness will be the result. In Germany the Blackthorn is said to have sprung from the corpse of a heathen slain in battle. In Sussex also this plant is regarded with superstitious fear. If among ourselves the belief is that the falling of a tree indicates a death, in Germany the trees should be informed of the decease of their master or mistress. In North Devon, as I learnt there the other day, if a swarm of bees alight on a dead tree, or on a dead branch, it indicates that a death will

occur in the owner's family during the year; and everything should be done to prevent such an unfortunate omen.

> "Swarmed on a rotten stick the bees I spied,
> Which erst I saw when Goody Dobson died."

Aubrey tells us that the grave-digger at Woking one day informed him of a rule which he had received from his father, by which he could tell when a corpse had not yet rotted. It was "when he found a certain plant about the bigness of the middle of a tobacco pipe, which came near the surface of the earth, but never appeared above it. It is very tough, and about a yard long; the rind of it is almost black, and tender, so that when you pluck it, it slips off, and underneath is red; it hath a small button at top, not much unlike the top of an Asparagus; of these sometimes he finds two or three in a grave. He is sure it is not a Fern root. He hath with diligence traced it to its root, and finds it to spring from the putrefaction of the dead body. The soil here is of a fine red or yellowish-red sand; so that the *cippus* of the grave is by the wind and the playing of the boys quickly equal'd with the other ground, and to avoid digging upon a fresh corps, as aforesaid, had this caution from his father. In Send churchyard, about a mile or two hence, and in such a soil, he told me, the like plant is found; but for other churchyards he can say nothing. He said that coffins rot in six years in the churchyard, in the church in eighteen years. This plant did put me in mind of the μολι (*sic*) mentioned by Homer, but that, Homer says, puts forth a little white flower a little above the earth." Respecting Homer's *Môly* (μῶλυ) and the superstitions connected with this magic plant with black root and white blossom, I cannot now write; but it may be suggested that the plant spoken of by Aubrey would seem to be a kind of Horsetail (*Equisetum*), which used to be compared by the old herbalists to the Asparagus plant, which it very much

resembles.[1] Another Homeric plant associated with death was the Asphodel, of which Milton speaks in *Comus*, l. 836:

> "And gave her to his daughters to imbathe
> In nectar'd lavers strew'd with Asphodel,
> And through the porch and inlet of each sense
> Dropt in ambrosial oils; till she reviv'd,
> And underwent a quick immortal change
> Made goddess of the river."

But enough of so melancholy a subject! let us turn to superstitions of another kind. One of the quaintest ideas is that which makes men to be the descendants of trees. The people of the north, with their strange, but interesting, mythology, believed that the first man was made from an Ash. All of us who are acquainted with the traditions and myths of the oldest races of mankind will call to mind that a similar belief existed among them. Greek writers tell how Zeus made a race of men, pugnacious and terrible, from Ash-wood, and from the sap of this tree the Grecian hero of old, and the Celtic Highlander to-day, alike received nourishment. Now the Ash-tree seems to be possessed of a larger amount of lore than almost any tree.[2] Most of the matter, however, belongs rather to the mythologist than to us, and I shall therefore be content with a brief notice of some of the points. In the north of England it is believed that if the first parings of a child's nails be buried under an Ash-tree, he will turn out by-and-by as a "top singer," as they express it. Spenser speaks of this tree as being "for nothing ill," yet it has always been regarded as a special attractor of lightning. The following lines are repeated in reference to this:

> "Beware of an Oak, it draws the stroke;
> Avoid an Ash, it courts the flash;
> Creep under the Thorn, it will save you from harm."

This virtue of the Thorn has been already noticed, and the

Norman peasant shows his confidence in it by constantly wearing a sprig in his cap, alleging as his reason that the Saviour's Crown was made of it. The Ash is employed for the cure of various kinds of complaints, as ague or rupture. The leaves and wood of the Ash have long been regarded throughout Northern Europe as a powerful protection from snakes and vipers. A curious old book has a chapter touching the keeping away of serpents from children in harvest-time; and in the woodcuts to one edition we find representations of the children comfortably slung in their cradles from the branches of great Ash trees, their mothers being meanwhile hard at work in the harvest-field below. The people of Sweden declare that the snake cannot abide the Ash, and will not willingly go near it. In Devonshire it is said that if a circle be traced with a staff made of Ash wood round a sleeping viper, the creature will be unable to pass beyond it. Some people find a connection between the May-pole, Christmas-tree, and other English institutions, and the old Ash-tree of the Northmen. With these latter people the great Ash-tree, Yggdrasil, represented the universe. Under its three roots were the place of torture, the land of the frost-giants, and the land of mortals. Water was daily poured over the tree from a deep, mysterious well, and under the shadow cast by it the gods were supposed to sit. "It can hardly have been the mere beauty of the Ash" (says Mr. King) "which induced our Scandinavian forefathers to adopt it as their mysterious world-tree, graceful and striking as it is, standing sentinel on the outskirts of the wood, or overhanging some broken river-bank, the dark lines of its curved branches traced here and there between masses of floating leafage. But the range of the Ash extends farther north than that of the Oak (which in more southern climes is regarded as the greatest tree). It is the chief timber-tree of the forests beyond the Baltic, and its wood was used for many purposes for which the Pines and Firs of the

northern forests were not available. The long spear-shafts and axe-handles of the heroes of the Sagas were made of Ash wood. Their ships also were not unfrequently built of Ash; and it may be either for this reason that Adam of Bremen gave the name of 'Ashmen' to the Vikings of Norway and Denmark, or because, as the prose Edda asserts, the three sons of the giant, of whom Odin was the eldest, made the first man from a block of Ash timber which they found on the seashore. The Ash, too, will grow on higher ground than most other trees, and in such situations affords in itself no bad image of a hardy northern 'Ashman.' Its sprays of foliage are thinner and more curved and its moss-covered trunk is knotted and twisted, as though it had encountered fierce obstacles in its rising, and had put forth all its strength in the struggle. It was partly from this power of battling with winter and rough weather, and partly perhaps from the mysterious feeling with which the old Saxon regarded it, that the Ash so often appears as the 'household tree' of outlying thorpes and granges. Many an ancient steading on the borders of the Devonshire moors, or on the high grounds of Hampshire,—the strongholds of Saxon tradition,—is thus marked by a group of knotted Ash trees. Some such reasons as these may have led to the adoption of the Ash as the great sacred tree of the north. Yet it is not easy to pluck out the heart of its mystery."

The Oak has been long regarded as the greatest rival of the Ash. Various omens were afforded by this tree. The change of its leaves from their usual colour was more than once regarded as giving a fatal premonition of coming misfortunes during the great civil war in England. It has long been looked upon as unlucky to cut down the Oak; and Aubrey says that "when an Oake is felling, before it falles it gives a kind of shriekes or groanes, that may be heard a mile off [elsewhere he limits it to half a mile], as if it were the genius [or ghost] of the Oake

lamenting. E. Wyld, Esq., hath heard it severall times." It was because "the shadow of a giant Oak, like that which stood in old Dodona, or those under whose spreading branches the Germans of Tacitus gathered to worship the invisible Presence, was the temple" of our forefathers, that the tree gained for itself this sacred character.[3] The author of "Magna Britannia" tells us of a great wood in the neighbourhood of Croyland (or Norwood), which belonged to the archbishops, and was said to consist wholly of Oak. Among the trees was one which bore Mistletoe, which some persons were so hardy as to cut down for the gain of selling it to the apothecaries in London, leaving a branch of it to sprout out; but they proved unfortunate after it, for one of them fell lame, and others lost an eye. At length, in the year 1678, a certain man, notwithstanding he was warned against it, on account of what the others had suffered, adventured to cut the tree down, and he soon after broke his leg. To fell Oaks has long been considered fatal, and such as believe it produce the instance of the Earl of Winchelsea, who, having felled a curious grove of

OAK (*Quercus sessiliflora*).

a, plant; *b*, stamens; *c*, anther; *d*, *e*, acorns.

Oaks, soon after found his countess dead in her bed suddenly; and his eldest son, the Lord Maidstone, was soon after killed by a cannon-ball. When Augustine came to England on his mission from Rome he took his stand under an Oak-tree on making his appeal to the king. In former times the same tree must often have afforded shelter for the preachers of the Truth, seeing that many still bear the name of Gospel Oak. In Finnish legends we read of an Oak which ever grew stouter and harder the more it was cut, while the name given to one species of this tree by the Hebrews bears a striking similarity to their name for God, as though they had called it the divine or sacred tree.

Many events in English tradition have had Oaks for their monuments. I know two Oaks in the south of England which are reputed to have been the identical ones in which Charles hid. We all know how the name of that king is still associated with the Oak on the 29th of May, still known as Royal Oak Day. On this occasion people still wear sprigs of Oak in their hats, and decorate their horses and houses with the same twigs. Sometimes the leaves and galls or "oak-apples" are covered over with gold-leaf in commemoration of Charles II., who marvellously eluded those that were in pursuit of him, and who actually passed (according to the commonly received report) the very tree in which he had secreted himself after the decisive battle of Worcester. A similar story is told in the East of the escape effected on one occasion by Genghis Khan. A note in Brand says that it is customary still to decorate the statue of Charles I. at Charing Cross with Oak leaves on this anniversary. "I remember the boys at Newcastle-upon-Tyne had formerly a taunting rhyme on this occasion with which they used to insult such persons as they met on that day who had not Oak leaves in their hat:

"'Royal Oak, the Whigs to provoke.'

"There was a retort courteous by others, who contemptuously wore Plane-tree leaves, which is of the same homely sort of stuff;

"'Plane-tree leaves, the church-folk are thieves.'"

Times and fashions change, for we read that in 1710 two soldiers were whipped almost to death, and turned out of the service for wearing boughs in their hats on the 29th of May. The following lines deserve a place here as affording apt illustration of our subject:—

"Blest Charles then to an Oak his safety owes;
The Royal Oak! which now in songs shall live,
Until it reach to Heaven with its boughs;
Boughs that for loyalty shall garlands give.

"Let celebrated wits, with Laurels crown'd,
And wreaths of Bays, boast their triumphant brows;
I will esteem myself far more renown'd,
In being honoured with these oaken boughs.

"The Genii of the Druids hover'd here,
Who under Oaks did Britain's glories sing;
Which, since, in Charles compleated did appear,
They gladly came now to protect their king."

In the north, the Oak was under the special protection of Thor. There is something almost sacred in connection with the Wistman's Wood on Dartmoor, to which I have elsewhere referred. The Druids reverenced the Oak, and the Mistletoe which grew upon it, and to this parasite we must now give a brief glance. The Worcestershire farmers were once in the habit, we are told, of taking their bough of Mistletoe and giving it to the cow that first calved after New Year's Day, as this act was supposed to avert ill-luck from the whole dairy. In Brittany it is called the *Herbe de la Croix*, because it was believed that it was from this plant that the Cross was made, though it fell from a fine forest tree to the degradation of a mere parasite in consequence of this

fact. Something more is said respecting it in the chapter which treats of plants connected with medicines, and I have also referred elsewhere to the Norse myth connected with the Mistletoe. The story is so pretty that I will offer no apology for giving it here in a fuller form, while I refer to the notes given in another chapter for its bibliography.[4] The following version has been taken from the interesting edition of "The Language of Flowers," which we have quoted from in other places.

Before we hear of the sacred Mistletoe of the Druids, we meet with the plant in the beautiful legend of the death of Baldur, from association with which it is possible that it derived its sanctity. The Apollo or Day-God of the Norsemen bore the name of Baldur the Good. He was beloved alike of gods and men. Without the brightness of his presence, Asgard, the abode of the gods,—of Odin, Thor, and Freyja,—would have been sad as Hades or Hel. Without his joyous blessing, Earth would have been dull and barren. Great trouble, therefore, fell on the immortals, when Baldur one day informed them that he had had terrific dreams threatening him with deadly peril. It seems that he did not possess the immortality which the Greeks ascribed to their mythic divinities. Therefore the gods of Walhalla at once resolved to use all their magic arts to preserve to themselves and to men their favourite deity. His mother, Frigga, or Freya (whose worship is still commemorated in the name of the sixth day of our week—but who ought not to be confused, as Frigga and Freya are really separate deities), resolved to take an oath from all created things that they would not harm Baldur. The goddess-mother met with a ready assent from fire, water, iron, stones, earths, diseases, beasts, birds, insects, and poisons. One thing only escaped her spell. There grew on the eastern side of Walhalla, an ancient Oak, attached to which, rooted on its gnarled branches, she perceived a tiny plant,—a soft, insignificant thing, with clear white berries

Its powerlessness to do harm caused her to pass it by. Alas! from all ages comes the warning, which teaches that *nothing* is insignificant. The mythology of ancient Scandinavia included a principle or power of evil, called Loki, whose chief aim was to do mischief, and to mar the happiness of the gods. Of all the deities Loki, the Dark Spirit, hated the God of Light the most. After the spell had been laid on all creation not to hurt Baldur, the gods were wont to try his immunity from harm by getting him to stand on the plains of Asgard and serve as a target, at which they hurled darts and stones, while others hewed at him with their swords and battle-axes. The spell worked well; Baldur was ever unhurt, and it came to be considered as an honour paid to him, when his invulnerability was thus tested. One day the gods were thus assembled, when Loki, hovering near unseen, gazed upon the singular spectacle. He beheld the bright-haired god, Baldur the Good, standing in a circle formed by the deities of Walhalla. Odin stood gazing on the sport, while Thor threw his mighty hammer at Baldur, which rebounded, without scath to the youthful god. In his turn each god hurled missiles or levelled blows at Baldur, who stood smiling at them, erect and unharmed. What could it mean? Loki, who would have rejoiced had every blow told, was determined to find out. So changing his shape to that of a fair and queenly woman, he hastened at once to the dwelling of Freya. The goddess received him graciously, and inquired whence he came. "From the place where the gods are making a target of Baldur the Good without hurting him," replied her false guest. "Aye," said Freya, "neither metal nor wood can hurt Baldur, for I have exacted an oath from all of them that they will not." "What!" exclaimed the guest, astonished and dismayed, "have all things sworn to spare Baldur?" "All things," replied Freya, "except one little shrub, that grows on the eastern side of Walhalla, and is called Mistletoe; I thought it too young and

feeble to crave an oath from it." A secret joy thrilled through the false maiden as she heard these words; and hastening away from Freya's dwelling as soon as she could, she flew to the spot where grew the fatal parasite. There resuming his proper shape. Loki cut off the Mistletoe, and hurried back to the plains of Asgard. He found the gods still at their somewhat singular amusement. The god Hödur, who was blind, was standing a little apart, and not sharing in it.

Loki, approaching him, asked,—"Why dost not thou also throw something at Baldur?" "Because I am blind," answered Hödur, "and see not where Baldur is, and have, moreover, nothing to throw." "Come then," said Loki, "do as the rest do, and show honour to Baldur by throwing this twig at him. I will direct thine arm to the place where he stands." Hödur took the Mistletoe, and, under the guidance of Loki, darted it at Baldur who, pierced at once by the dart, fell down lifeless. The grief and rage of the gods were intense at this cruel termination to their homage. They at once detected Loki in the deed, and would have avenged it on him at once had they not been restrained in their vengeance by the sacred character of the spot on which it was wrought. Thus fell Baldur the Good (says the Norse legend), by the bough of the uncharmed Mistletoe, of which plant Longfellow and Arnold have sweetly sung.

The Mistletoe, as we have seen, was doubly sacred when it grew on the sacred Oak. We are told that the Irish St. Colman presided over a famous Oak tree, any fragment of which, if kept in the mouth, would effectually ward off death by hanging. When St. Columba's Oak at Kenmare was blown down in a storm, no one dared to touch it, or to apply its wood to ordinary purposes, except a certain tanner, who cured his leather with the bark. With the leather he made himself a pair of shoes; but the first time he put them on he was struck with leprosy,

and so remained all his life. The trees of saints might nowhere be profaned with impunity, says Mr. King. In the cloister of Vreton, in Brittany, was a Yew-tree, which had sprung from the staff of St. Martin. Under its shadow the Breton princes always prayed before entering the church. No one dared touch a leaf, and even the birds treated the sweet, scarlet berries with respect. But a band of pirates once visited the place, two of whom had the audacity to climb the venerable tree, from which they proceeded to cut bow-staves. But as the just reward for their rash act, says tradition, both fell, and were killed on the spot.

There is a superstition respecting the Maple, to the effect that long life will be conferred upon the children who are passed through its branches. It is related, that there once stood an old tree of this kind in a certain park in Sussex, to which the people had constant recourse for the purpose of passing their children through it. A few years ago a rumour spread through the parish that the tree was to be felled, and at once a number of petitions were made that it might be spared. Such is the effect of superstition even upon English minds and hearts of to-day!

We have a pretty little flower common in our English gardens, which grows with nice effect on rockery. It is known by a variety of local names, such as Anise, Sweet Alice, Heal-dog, or Heal-bite. All these names have reference to a superstitious notion once entertained respecting a plant which was named by the ancients *Alyssum*. The word Anise is formed by a common interchange of letter; *e.g.*, Slag (a sloe) is changed to Snag in Somersetshire. Alice is just a simple adaptation of the Latin word to English mouths, while the other names translate or give the sense of the older and foreign word. There was a certain plant which was believed to cure hydrophobia, or prevent

madness through the effects of a dog's bite. Turner says of this plant that "it helpeth the biting of a wod (mad) dogge." As in many other cases, the plant which we call Alice is quite different from that which first received the name, but the superstition has been handed over to the plant along with the name. The name of the Celandine—a flower of which Wordsworth was so fond, and which in the early springtime adorns our meadows and hedgerows with bright golden flowers which are generally confused with buttercups — is interesting. It comes from a word meaning a swallow. Gerarde tells us that this is "not it first springeth at the coming in of the swallowes, or dieth when they go away, for it may be founde all the yeare, but because some holde opinion that with this herbe the dams *restore sight* to their young ones, when their eies be put out." This notion is very old, and may be traced back to Pliny and Aristotle. Every writer on botany a few centuries ago repeated the tale as a positive fact, and many others of a similar nature may be found in the works of those times. William Coles, one of these writers, assumes it to be an indisputable fact, and says, "It is known to such as have skill of

ANISE (*Pimpinalla Anisum*).
a, *b*, plant; *c*, blossom; *d*, double fruit; *e*, the same in section.

nature, what wonderful care she hath of the smallest creatures, giving to them a knowledge of medicine to help themselves, if haply diseases are among them. The Swallow cureth her dim eyes with Celandine; the Wesell knoweth well the virtue of Herb Grace; the Dove the Verven; the Dogge dischargeth his mame with a kind of grass; and too long it were to reckon up all the medicines which the beasts are known to use by nature's direction only." I believe it to be a fact, however, that certain animals have a natural instinct which leads them at proper times to go and find certain herbs and grasses which they eat medicinally. Coles tells us respecting the Eyebright how "Divers authors write that goldfinches, linnets, and some other birds make use of this herb, for the repairing of their own and their young ones' sight. The purple and yellow spots and stripes which are upon the flowers of Eyebright, doth very much resemble the diseases of the eyes, as blood-shot, etc. By which signature it hath been found out that this herb is very effectual for the curing of the same." In similar fashion the eagle brightens its eye with the Wild Lettuce; and the Hawk-bit or Hawk-weed was used by the hawk for the same purpose. A certain fern (*Asplenium Ceterach*), commonly known as Finger-fern, used to bear the name of Miltwaste. Respecting this it is said:

> "The Finger-ferne, which being given to swine,
> It makes their Milt to melt away in fine."

This notion seems to have sprung from an earlier assertion that in the Isle of Crete the flocks and herds were found without spleens, on account of their having browsed on this herb. In some parts of the island the plant did not grow, and there the cattle all had spleens—a clear proof that the Miltwaste was the sole cause of the affection. Coles remarks on this plant also that "if the asse be oppressed with melancholy, he eates

of this herbe, and so eases himself of the swelling of the spleen." The idea doubtless originated, as Dr. Prior suggests, in the doctrine of signatures, of which I have given a fuller explanation in another chapter. The shape of the leaf of the plant which originally bore the name was doubtless similar to that of the spleen, and, as the shapes corresponded, it was believed that one ought to see in this an indication that God intended the plant to be used for complaints and diseases connected with the organ so closely resembling it. Great faith was placed in this plant, it being asserted that "no herbe maie be compared therewith for his singular vertue to help the sickness or grief of the splene."

In a former chapter I gave a number of stories respecting plants employed by birds for opening nests and removing articles placed in their way. Aubrey tells us an English anecdote which is worth insertion here, as bearing on this class of superstitions. "Sir Bennet Hoskins, Baronet, told me that his keeper at his parke at Morehampton, in Herefordshire, did, for experiment's sake, drive an iron naile thwert the hole of the woodpecker's nest, there being a tradition that the damme will bring some leafe to open it. He layed at the bottome of the tree a cleane sheet, and before many houres passed the naile came out, and he found a leafe lying by it on the sheete. They say the Moonewort will doe such things. This experiment may easily be tryed again." Respecting this same thing Coles remarks. "It is said, yea, and believed by many, that Moonewort will open the locks wherewith dwelling-houses are made fast, if it be put into the key-hole."[5] Culpepper, the old herbalist, tells us that "Moonwort is an herb which (they say) will open locks, and unshoe such horses as tread upon it. This some laugh to scorn, and those no small fools neither; but country people that I know call it Unshoe-the-Horse. Besides, I have heard com-

manders say, that on White Down in Devonshire, near Tiverton, there were found thirty horseshoes, pulled off from the feet of the Earl of Essex's horses, being there drawn up in a body, many of them being but newly shod, and no reason known, which caused much admiration; and the herb described usually grows upon heaths." The belief in the power of the Moonwort is of considerable antiquity, and it is said to exist still in Normandy and Central France. Similar powers are attributed to Vervain, Mandrake, Artemisia, and other plants, while in India and China we still meet with superstitions of the same kind.

I have already more than once referred to traditions and superstitions which connect plants with blood and milk spilt by warriors, martyrs, and saints.[6] Let me here add another word on the same subject. There are certain plants which go by the name of Dane-wort, Dane-weed or Danes'-blood, connected with which we have a number of legends, telling how the plants in question sprang up from the blood of the Danes who had been killed in battle. Defoe, in his "Tour through Great Britain," speaks of his going a little out of the road from Daventry to see a great camp called Barrow Hill, and adds, "They say this was a Danish camp, and everything hereabout is attributed to the Danes, because of the neighbouring Daventry, which they suppose to be built by them. The road hereabouts, too, being overgrown with Dane-weed, they fancy it sprung from the blood of Danes, slain in battle; and that if upon a certain day in the year you cut it, it bleeds." The French have the following legend respecting the rose-coloured Sainfoin:—When Jesus was lying in the manger at Bethlehem this plant was found among the dried grass and herbs which served for His bed. All at once the Sainfoin began to expand its pretty flowers, and form a wreath around the head of the infant Saviour.

The traditions respecting the Hyacinth are well known. Some

affirmed that they could read on the flower the exclamation of woe, "Ai, ai," which Apollo raised as the Hyacinth sprang from the blood of the friend he had accidentally slain. To others the marks were said to indicate that the name of Ajax was to be read there, his blood having produced the flower. The Mulberry, again, was red with the blood of living hearts; the Crocus was said to have sprung up on the spot where the god Zeus on one occasion reclined; the Mint was once, in divine form, beloved of Pluto, god of the under-world; and even the Cabbage is said to have been born of the tears shed by the famous Lycurgus. But to relate all the myths told by fanciful and poetic Greeks, as well as by more modern story-tellers, would require a volume in itself.

The connection of the cuckoo with flower-lore is extensive, and this partly because it comes among us just as the spring flowers are growing plentiful, and partly because that bird has always been regarded as possessed of powers of augury.

> "Cuckoo, merry bird, sings as she flies,
> Brings us good tidings, and tells us no lies."

The flowers named after the cuckoo partake to some extent of its mystic and prophetic character. "One of these, perhaps, was the Plantain, or Way-bread, said to have been once a maiden who, watching by the wayside for her lover, was changed into the plant which still loves to fix itself beside the beaten path. Once in seven years it becomes a bird,—either the cuckoo, or the cuckoo's servant, the 'dinnick,' as it is called in Devonshire." The Plantain is employed in divination. In Germany, if the Cuckoo sings after St. John's Day, grapes ripen with difficulty, and a scarcity of the produce of the earth will be the result. The Lancashire ploughman believes that "the cuckoo comes wi' a Haw leaf, and gangs wi' a Bear-head (*i.e.*, a four-rowed Varley."

In the west of Scotland it is said that the cuckoo flies away on the first sight she obtains of barley in the ear.

Many of the commonest superstitions are the most difficult to account for. Thus, if you cut the root of a fern slant-wise, you will see the picture of an Oak tree; and the saying is that the more perfect the representation, the more lucky will the person be who cuts it. Why this is, no one seems to have explained. So in Somersetshire it is believed that a flowering Myrtle is the greatest acquisition to a house which one can have. The saying connected with it is—Water it every morning, and be proud of it; for it is the luckiest plant to have in your window. To get the plant to grow (which is often a most difficult matter), you should spread the tail or skirt of the dress when planting the slip, and *look proud!*

The idea that plants will indicate one's fortune is firmly rooted in the minds of the common people. Herrick supplies us with the following allusion to divination by means of the Daffodil:

> "When a Daffadill I see
> Hanging down her head t'wards me,
> Guess I may what I must be:
> First, I shall decline my head;
> Secondly, I shall be dead;
> Lastly, safely buriéd."

"In March, when the early spring flowers are showing themselves, we hear the village children repeating these lines:—

> "'Daff-a-down-dill
> Has now come to town
> In a yellow petticoat
> And a green gown.'"

In Lancashire and some other places the children of the poor sell the "Lent lily" or "Lents," as they call the Daffodil, for *pins*,

it being unlucky to take money. But the sight of the silver is fast pushing out such pretty customs.

The old practice of going to the churchyard on Midsummer or St. Valentine's Eve and repeating the words "Hempseed Ison," etc., is too well known, and has been too often referred to to need a full description here. It seems to have been well-nigh universal in England at one time. The same may be said of the Yarrow and its lore. Some people still believe that during Leap-year the beans which grow, set the opposite way to what they do in other years, this being the year when ladies have the privilege of making love. As the lasses resorted to all sorts of devices for ascertaining who should be their lover, so the bachelors had their "buttons"—flowers which they wore or carried in their pockets to enable them to judge correctly in reference to their love affairs.

Superstitions are associated with the use of evergreens in houses and churches. In the West Riding of Yorkshire it is thought to be sinful to burn such as have been used for decorations. Elsewhere I have quoted Herrick's words, which tell how there was once an idea that there would be as many goblins make their appearance in a house, as there were leaves of evergreens left in the house after Candlemas Eve. Hence all Christmas decorations should be removed before that date. If a leaf or berry be found in one of the pews, some member of the family will die during the year. We read of an old lady who was so particular on this point that she used to send her servant to church to see if all was clear. The fairies claimed green as their colour, and were consequently deeply grieved if proper attention was not paid to their claims and invariably resented an injury done them. It seems to be on this account that green is regarded by the Scotch as an unlucky colour at weddings, in consequence of which no kale, cabbage, or other green vegetable may be served up on the occasion. As to

fairies were so very strict, and deprived people of their rights, we might be inclined to dissent from Selden when he racily remarks that "It was never a merry world since the fairies left off dancing, and the parsons left off conjuring." Here it would seem as though fairies and parsons were once in league, and this may account for the expulsion of greens from the table and evergreens from the church on certain set occasions. Mr. King remarks on Selden's note that we can hardly foresee "what amount of merriness might return to us if the parsons could be persuaded to resume their conjuring caps; but we are sure there are a thousand good reasons for regretting the fairies. How much poetry has left the world since Oberon and Titania

"'Danced full oft in many a grene mead,'

"and the Cowslips were the pensioners of the fairy queen! In those days there was scarcely a flower in wood or on river bank but had its mysterious connection with the elfin-world, or with a spirit land yet more antique and shadowy. Hardly a tree in the greenwood—from the great Oak of Thor to the Elder with its white blossoms glimmering through the shade, but had its wild legends, its marvellous properties, and sometimes its special ghostly protector. Now-a-days, though the flowers are as bright, and the greenwood, though scarcely as widespreading, is yet as pleasant and as varied as ever, the elf is but rarely seen under the blossoms, and even the memory and the honours of Boscobel are fading away from the royal Oak. The belief, which in those old days gave life to moorland and forest, has disappeared. Like Aubrey's Cirencester ghost, the small people have, however, not vanished from middle earth without leaving a 'curious prefume' behind them; and it is still possible to trace their ancient presence, not only by the dark rings on the sward, but by the mark set by them on many a plant and flower, sometimes in the names which still cling to

them, and sometimes in the shape of lingering folk-lore and tradition. In this way

"'The flower-inwoven mantle of the earth'

"has become a sort of palimpsest—an illuminated page on which the signs of many different ages lie half-concealed, one above another. Underneath the characters of the fairies are those of the old northern deities—Woden, and Thor, and Freyja; and deeper still those of the more ancient world into which they intruded—the world of Pæon, the physician of Olympus, who bestowed his name on the Peony; and of Helen of Troy, whose virtues, if not her beauty, are commemorated in the Helenium or Elecampane 'of which herbe' (says old Gerarde) 'she had her hands full when she was carried off.' The deciphering of these overlying characters, if not always an easy, is for the most part a pleasant task and one that leads us to some of the most famous of the world's centres, and into many of its most lovely nooks and corners."

PEONY (*Pœonia officinalis*).
a, blossom; *b*, stamen; *c*, burst pod; *d*, root.

Speaking of the Peony reminds me that it used to be customary in my native county and elsewhere for the people to have necklaces made of beads turned from the root of that plant, which

they called "piney beads," and placed on the necks of their children to keep them from convulsions, as well as to assist them in cutting their teeth. This piece of superstition is probably of very ancient date (as Mrs. Latham remarks), for the Peony is known to have been held in such high repute of old as to be accounted of divine origin, an emanation from the moon, endowed with the property of shining in the night, of chasing away evil spirits, and protecting the houses near which it grew. According to Homer it was with the Peony that the great physician cured Phito of a wound inflicted by Hercules. In China the beautiful Moutan, which is one kind of Peony, is regarded with superstitious reverence and pride. I left the East just at the time of the Chinese New Year, when the flowers were in their prime, and saw many choice specimens of this plant in full bloom at the time. They were peculiarly fine in 1880, which led the Hong-Kong papers to notice them in the following words:—"Conspicuous amongst the new year displays of flowers in the Chinese shops to-day we notice three magnificent specimens of the *máu tán fá* (Moutan flower), commonly known from its scarcity 'as the Rich Man's flower.' These are Chinese Peonies from Fá-tí Gardens, Canton (just opposite my own residence in that city). The flower, from a very small, withered-like root, is in one case some seven inches in diameter, of a beautiful light-pink hue, and has been greatly admired by foreigners and Chinese alike. The others, not full blown, are even more pretty. The flowers are regular curios,—there being, we believe, nothing of the kind in our English flora."[7] I find the following interesting note on the Peony:—"On the death of a friend in the summer, an old lady, a relative, who went on a visit of condolence to the widow, went quietly into the garden and counted the flowers on the Peonies. On her return, after remarking that a dog was howling before the door but a short time before, when she was there, and that it was

generally accounted a sign of death, she said she had counted the flowers on the Peonies in the garden, and there was an odd number on each plant, which was a sure sign of a death in the house before the year was out."

It is often difficult to classify superstitions, as they seem to cover so wide a range that at times they fall under no definite heads. Thus we read of the Strawberry—a plant which yields to none for pleasantness of taste and wholesomeness—that if any one who is suffering from a wound in his head should eat of them, they are sure to prove fatal. There is no county in which superstition has been more rife than in Devonshire, where I now reside. A few miles from my home is the village of Ide, close to which, by the side of the road, stands a "twist tree," the bark of which goes round it after the fashion of a corkscrew, a peculiarity which is thus accounted for. The place was, according to long-received tradition, haunted in olden times by a troublesome spright, who turned the milk and the beer sour, kept the butter from coming, prevented the rising of the dough, frightened gentle maidens in the dark, set peaceable neighbours quarrelling, and soon made the village of Ide almost uninhabitable. An Oxford scholar was at last applied to, who succeeded in laying the ghost in this tree. All the former discomfort experienced by the quiet villagers was now at an end; but in consequence of the dislike which the spirit has to its prison-house, it never ceases to twist and wriggle round and round; whence the peculiar appearance of the tree. Herrick, whose name and rhymes have frequently been introduced in these pages, once lived for some years in Devonshire; but he regarded the people as "churlish as the seas," and even called them "rude (almost) as rudest salvages." As he had few compliments for the people, the famous county itself was not much higher in his estimation.

"More discontents I never had
Since I was born, than here;
Where I have been and still am sad,
In this dull Devon-shire."

One interested in flowers will find Devonshire anything but dull, at any rate, during the spring, summer, and autumn seasons. The world everywhere is dull in winter, so Devonia must not be charged for being on a par with the rest of the country. And as this fair county is famous for its flowers and ferns and plants, its flower-lore is likewise extensive. This we have already gathered to some extent in the foregoing pages. If a branch of the Christmas evergreens should be found in the house after Candlemas day, for example, the people consider it indicative of impending death or some other sad misfortune in store for the household. Here, as elsewhere, the first three days of March were formerly called "blind-days," and, being considered unlucky, the farmers would never sow any seed on these days. There is still a belief in Devonshire and in other places that if seeds, flowers, and plants be put in the ground on Good Friday, they will grow all the better for it; but, strange to say, exactly the reverse is believed by some people. In Sussex the peasants used, in my juvenile days, to look forward to Good Friday as a regular day for working in their cottage gardens, and I find the same in the neighbourhood in which I am now living. Abroad we find the belief in some parts that the potato thrives best if planted on Maundy-Thursday; if it be planted under certain stars it will become watery. Turnips must be planted on St. Margaret's day, and it will not do to carry a leaf from the field, otherwise the vegetable will become dry.

One of the most curious of superstitions is that which links up the life of a person with a flower. A friend of mine used to possess some of the hair of a sailor who was away on

a long voyage, and whenever she wished to know if he still lived she would undo the hair and feel it. If her friend was no more, the hair would become stiff and dead. This class of superstitions is extensive, and has received a large share of attention, one branch of the subject being that which I have indicated, with which we have all grown familiar through reading such books as Grimm's "Household Stories." We call to mind the story of the Golden Children. A poor fisherman and his wife have two children. When they grow up they desire to see the world, but the parents are loth to let them leave their home, for when they have once gone, perhaps no more tidings will be heard of them. "Indeed!" replied the boys, "the two golden Lilies will be with you, and by them you can judge how it is with us. When they are fresh, we are in good health: should they fade, some misfortune has overtaken us; but when they die, we are dead." They left home, but one of them fell home-sick, and returned. As he one day stood by the two golden Lilies growing in the garden, suddenly the one which represented his brother fell. "Ah," said he, "my brother has met with some mishap, I must go and find him, for I may yet be able to save him from death." The father entreated him to stay, but he was soon on the back of his golden horse and away through the woods in search of his brother. He found him at last under the spell of a witch, and, having set him free, the two embraced each other. The father instantly knew that all was well, for as he stood by the flowers, all at once the golden Lily whose head had drooped, began to blossom again as fresh as ever. Again, in the story of the Twelve Brothers, a little girl goes into the garden and finds twelve Lilies growing there. Thinking to please her brothers by presenting them each with a flower, she plucks them, when her brothers are instantly changed into ravens. Such examples are common in the folk-tales of many, nay most, nations

Superstitions connecting the moon with plants and flowers are very common. The reason of this seems to be that it used to be generally believed that every plant was under the rule of some planet. Thus Culpepper writes of the Herb Robert that it will stay blood, heal wounds, and cure ulcers. "You may persuade yourself this is true" (he adds), "and also conceive a good reason for it; do but consider it as an herb of Venus, for all it hath a man's name." At the commencement of "The English Physician Enlarged" is an index telling where to find certain plants, "as also what planet governeth them." Thus "Heart Trefoil is under the dominion of the sun," but "Pearl Trefoil is a herb of the Moon," under which planet the Apple-tree also comes in Devonshire. This at least one would conclude from the fact that in this county the farmers and peasantry gather in the Apples which they intend to store away at the "shrinking of the moon." So long as the moon is increasing the Apples are full, and they will not keep. A gravedigger the other day remarked that a person we were burying could not be kept long as he died "full," seeing he had had some supper just before going to bed, never to rise again. So if an Apple is stored "full" it will not keep long; but it begins to fast as soon as the moon begins to wane. That is the argument, although you do not hear it reasoned out, perhaps, in so many words. Another superstition among the same simple folk is to the effect that if the sun should shine on the Apple-trees on Christmas day, and the day be fine, it is an indication of good crops the ensuing year. On the other hand, a gloomy Christmas Day, with no sun, augurs ill. This may perhaps be a proper place for mentioning the old custom of blessing or wassailing the Apple-trees, of which we have so often heard. The custom has not yet died out; for on the 17th of January of the year 1882, the men and lads of Wiveliscombe, in the West of England, went round singing to the

Apple-trees on the various farms as they used to do a century ago. This custom owes its origin to the superstition to which Herrick refers in the following lines from his *Hesperides*—

> "Wassaile the trees that they may beare
> You many a Plum and many a Peare;
> For more or lesse fruits they will bring,
> As you do give them wassailing."

There are many versions of the toast sung to the trees on this occasion, but none of them display any great amount of poetic genius. The lines, as given to me by one who used to join in the ceremony, are as follows:—

> "Health to thee, good Apple-tree!
> Well to bear hats full, caps full,
> Three bushel bags full."

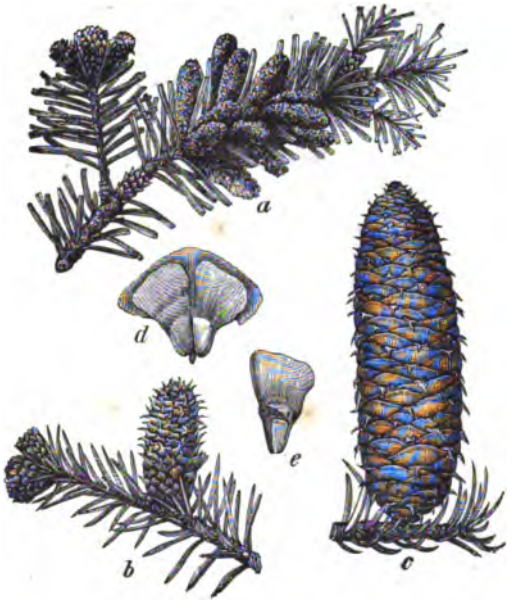
The notes will enable the reader to compare the other versions. The toast having been sung, three cheers are given for the tree; and of late years, in the neighbourhood of Newton Abbot and Torquay, guns were fired as well. The custom has a long and interesting history. Some have suggested that as the Mistletoe grows largely on the Apple-tree, this latter came in for a share of the sanctity and reverence to which the Oak had laid claim. It is said that the Romans introduced the Apple-tree into England, and that the custom above referred to is observed in honour of Pomona, the goddess of fruit-trees, in memory of whom the people of Somersetshire still call a kind of cider-wine "Pomona." Others find in the custom a connecting link with the German method of inciting the trees to fruitfulness; while some, finally, think that the ceremony is connected with the old customs observed still in the Black Mountains and elsewhere, and corresponding to the Chinese sun-worship at the time of the New Year. At any rate, seeing that all these explanations eventually lead us back

to heathen times, we may feel sure that the superstition originated in the idea, either that the presiding deity of the trees would be thereby honoured and coaxed into a good humour, or that the sun-god would smile favourably upon the trees and make them fruitful.

Some Scotch superstitions are very curious. The Puff-ball is called "Blind Men's Een," and if by any means the dust from one should enter the eyes it was believed to cause certain blindness. In some parts of Buchan the Bluebell (*Campanula*) used to be called the "Aul' Man's Bell," and being regarded by many with a kind of dread, it was commonly left standing where found. Some curious superstitions connect animals with plants. There is a kind of thistle known as Hare's Lettuce, the old belief being that by eating this plant the hare recruits her strength, or recovers herself from summer madness. The Grete Herball tells us that the same plant was called Hare's Palace: "For yf the hare come under it, he is sure that no beast can touche hym." But as references to such superstitions may be indefinitely multiplied, I will close with the following example:—

The common Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*) bears among rustics in the midland counties the vulgar name of "Crazy," for which, until lately, I could never account; but it would appear that this meadow plant is considered an "insane herb" by country people, for I heard lately, from a trustworthy source, that the smell of the flowers was considered to produce madness. "Throw those nasty flowers away," said a country woman to some children, who had gathered their handful of buttercups, "for the smell of them will make you mad." This must be the origin of the term "crazy" applied to the plant, but biting as the leaf is when chewed, what should have given an ill-reputation to the golden flowers? We are reminded of the name Drunkard, as applied by the Devonshire lads and lasses to the Horse Butter-

cups or Bull's Eyes, as Marsh Marigolds are called in the West of England. Let no one after this despise our common flowers, or think lightly of their vulgar names, for much treasure may sometimes be found hidden under a rough expression or name.



SPRUCE (*Abies pectinata*).

a, branchlet with anthers; *b*, branchlet with stamens; *c*, cone; *d*, scale of cone with seed; *e*, seed.

CHAPTER XI.

FLOWERS AND SHOWERS.

WE must not be misled into the supposition that this chapter will tell us about showers of flowers; although we do read in Eastern books, if not in those written in the West, of occurrences of this kind. Persons who are familiar with India and China, and the lives of Buddha and Confucius, will know that in those countries these two great men were supposed to have been honoured in a remarkable way at their birth. Mr. Edwin Arnold sweetly sings:

"In this wise was the holy Buddha born.
Queen Maya stood at noon, her days fulfilled,

Under a Palsa in the Palace grounds,
A stately trunk, straight as a temple-shaft,
With crown of glossy leaves and fragrant blooms;
And, knowing the time come,—for all things knew,—
The conscious tree bent down its boughs to make
A bower about Queen Maya's majesty,
And Earth put forth a thousand sudden flowers
To spread a couch; while, ready for the bath,
The rock hard by gave out a limpid stream
Of crystal flow."

The Buddhists, a religious body numbering many millions of souls in China, Japan, Thibet, Siam, and other Eastern countries, derive their name and creed from this son of Maya; and many are the pretty legends told by them respecting flowers. They believe, for example, that not only do flowers announce the birth of a saint or deity, but also that the colour of the first flower upon which they fix their gaze will be the same as that of their own persons. Thus we are told that all the Devas of the Kâma Loka, or Love-Abode, are coloured according to the hue of the flower they first see after their birth in these heavens; if the flower is purple, so are they; and so, whether it be red, or yellow, or white. This sounds strange to English ears, but he who has gazed upon the four monstrous gods which guard the entrance to some Buddhist temples, and has noticed that one is green, another red, and so on, will find no difficulty in understanding this otherwise quaint conception. Another legend from the same source tells that when a god is about to be born in the celestial regions, the goddess who is to be his mother finds a flower in her hand; by means of this sign she is made aware that she will soon have a son. It is said of Queen Maya that she not only gave birth to her son on a flowery couch, but also held a flowering branch of some tree in her hand. A learned French writer aptly remarks that we have in these legends the counterparts of those which were common among the Greeks

who taught how Zeus reposed with Here on the summit of Ida upon a couch formed of Crocus, Hyacinth, and Lotus flowers, a cloud screening them meanwhile from the fierce blaze of the sun. In the old language of India, *Pushpa* meant a flower, and from this word one of the names of Buddha was derived, and Vishnu is designated by another epithet from the same source, which indicates that whenever he laughs flowers drop from his lips. In a Persian novel we also read of a queen who lets flowers fall from her mouth every time she laughs, and thus, when she is in good humour, there is a literal shower of flowers. Once more, the Chinese tell similar stories of their great sage Confucius, relating how wonderful animals came to greet his mother; and while the air resounded with stirring and delightful strains of music, a sweet fragrance tempered the atmosphere, as flowers fell around.[1] But such delights as these are not for ordinary mortals; and if for a god or a sage, the desert will rejoice and blossom as the Rose, we must be content with having the showers indicated by, while we do not look for them in the form of, flowers.

In yet another way flowers and showers are connected. The Lesser Celandine, as all who have examined the flower in spring know, has a number of roots about the size and shape of a grain of wheat. These are attached to each other by means of thin fibres, which may easily be broken. As these roots lie near the surface they are sometimes washed bare, and even detached from each other, by a violent shower, and left on the face of the earth, looking exactly as though some one had been sowing wheat. This peculiar circumstance has more than once given rise to the idea that it had rained wheat, until a more careful observation discovered the true origin of the matter. That people used to believe in the possibility of almost anything coming in the form of rain, has been shown by my friend

Mr. Andrews in his quaint little "Book of Oddities;" and the people of China tell marvellous tales of the strange showers with which the Flowery Empire have been visited. But our business in this chapter is rather with the connection between flowers and the weather. The subject is sometimes spoken of as the weather-lore of plants; and every one is aware that plants were about the truest barometers that our ancestors possessed. Many of the names by which our common flowers are known in various places illustrate the way in which our forefathers regarded them as indicators of times and seasons. We will look at the matter in the broadest light, and notice the facts and superstitions respecting the connection of flowers with the changes in the weather and in the hour or time of the day. We shall be able to give a glance at the floral clock, and perhaps enter into some other points of interest connected with our subject.

In early times the clouds were frequently compared to a tree, for just as the tree cast a refreshing shade around the homeless savage, or protected the traveller from the fierce rays of the sun, or afforded fruit for the supply of his wants, so the clouds, as they covered the face of the sky and hid for a time the fiery eye of day, not only afforded shelter, but also caused the earth to bring forth fruit for man and beast. The comparison between a tree and a cloud having been established, it soon became customary to ask whether the trees ever rained as the clouds did, and men answered "Yes!" Many trees and plants have the property of absorbing a great quantity of moisture, which frequently collects at the point where the leaves are joined to the branch or stem, and finally of discharging it in drops in such a way as to give the tree all the appearance of producing a shower. This fact has come to the aid of the superstitious, and many a curious tale has been told respecting the "Rain-trees." Pietro Martire, for example, in describing the Iron Island, says:

"On the 25th of September, 1493, we set sail from Gades (Cadiz), and on the 1st of October arrived at one of the Canary Isles called the Isle of Iron; where it is said that there is no other drinking water than such as comes in the form of dew from a tree which grows in an artificial lake at the summit of a mountain in the island." On this tradition an Italian poet has founded the first part of a poem entitled "The Ocean." But the tradition does not seem to have been generally known to English readers, for in 1877 the papers had a paragraph respecting a singular tree, which was not less beneficial than such valuable plants as the Eucalyptus and others, which have the property of destroying miasma. This tree, it was said, provided moisture in dry places, and it was anticipated that the "Rain-tree" would make the desert and the wild rejoice, by converting them into fertile gardens. A little investigation brought to light the fact that nearly a century and a half ago a Mr. Cockburn had made the following record: "Near the mountains of Vera Paz (Guatemala) we came out on a large plain, where were numbers of fine deer, and in the middle stood a tree of unusual size, spreading its branches over a vast compass of ground. We had perceived, at some distance off, the ground about it to be wet, at which we began to be somewhat surprised, as well knowing there had no rain fallen for near six months past. At last, to our great amazement, we saw water dropping, or, as it were, distilling fast from the end of every leaf." Good authorities state that the young leaves of the "Rain-tree" are still delicate and transparent in the month of April. During the whole day a fine spray of rain is to be noticed under the tree even in the driest air, which makes the soil all around quite moist. As the leaves develop, the deposit gradually diminishes, and ceases altogether when they have grown old. One writer asserts that it absorbs and condenses the humidity of the atmosphere with

astonishing rapidity, and adds that people have frequently seen water ooze from the trunk and fall in rain from the branches in such quantity that the ground beneath is converted into a perfect swamp. As the tree is said to possess this property in the highest degree during the summer season especially, when the rivers are low and water is scarce, the suggestion has been made that it should be planted freely in the arid regions of Peru, for the benefit of the farmers there.

Dr. Spence, who has travelled in South America, thus writes:— "The Tamia-caspi, or Rain-tree, of the Eastern Peruvian Andes, is not a myth, but a fact, although not exactly in the way popular rumour has lately presented it. I first witnessed the phenomenon in September 1855, when residing at Tarapolo, a town, or large village, a few days eastward of Moyabamba. A little after seven o'clock we came under a lowish spreading tree, from which, with a perfectly clear sky overhead, a smart rain was falling. A glance upward showed a multitude of cicadas, sucking the juice of the tender young branches and leaves, and squirting forth slender streams of limpid fluid. My two Peruvians were already familiar with the phenomenon, and they knew very well that almost any tree, when in a state to afford food to the nearly omnivorous cicada, might become a Rain-tree." But although any one who has lived in the East, or in tropical climes where the cicada is abundant, will have become familiar with the sticky kind of dew here referred to, this alone will not account for all the phenomena connected with the matter. In China I found the cicada to be specially fond of the Banyan, but the Rain-tree, or the tree which has chiefly borne the name, seems to be a kind of Acacia. Further, the Apple-tree, Oak, Ash, Fig, Lime, Lotus, Olive, Palm, Black Poplar, and various other trees and plants have been regarded in various countries as endued with the power of producing showers. In New Zealand

we find a tree possessed of this property, according to native belief; and this tree is said to have sprung from the leaves which fell from the crown of Hatu-patu, the god of the winds. In the Indian Archipelago there is a similar legend, and, in fact, everywhere we find its counterpart.

Linnæus divided flowers into three classes, according to their sensibility to atmospheric changes. In the first class he put Meteoric flowers, which less accurately observe the hour of folding, but are expanded sooner or later, according to the cloudiness, moisture, or pressure of the atmosphere. The second class bore the name of Tropical flowers, and included such as open in the morning and close before evening every day; but the hour of their expanding becomes earlier or later as the length of the day increases or decreases. Lastly, there are the Equinoctial flowers, or those which open at a certain and exact hour of the day, and for the most part close at another determinate hour. It was from the observation of these peculiarities in the movements of flowers that the celebrated botanist was able to arrange his flower clock. "It was a happy idea of Linnæus" (says Dr. Cooke) "to construct a 'floral clock,' with the hours representing the opening or closing of certain flowers. It was also the same botanist who applied the name of 'Meteoric flowers' to such as closed and expanded periodically, at or near the same period of time, or such as appeared to be influenced especially by definite atmospheric changes in opening or closing. Pretty and poetic as such a theory may be, it is doubtful if it extends beyond this. A dull day and a bright sunny one, a dry morning or a moist one, will certainly not produce the same results. The opening and closing, depending so much on light and temperature, will be related more to the bright, clear sky and the warm, genial atmosphere, than to the particular hour of the day. Admitting all these influences and conditions, it is doubtless true that

under a normal condition there are many flowers which open or close nearly at the same time, or within an hour. It might be said that certain flowers have a manifest tendency to open or close at or about a certain time, unless this tendency is disturbed or thwarted by special interference. Probably this was all that Linnæus ever intended, and that his design was to indicate that some flowers expanded with the first break of day, others not until noon, and others again in the evening, or during the night." The author of "Leaves from the Book of Nature" tells us that he went a few years ago to see, near Upsala, the cottage of this father of modern botany, and that among all the relics carefully preserved near his home, there was no token of the pious reverence with which his countrymen honour his name more touching than his floral clock. In a half circle, carefully arranged around his writing-table, stood a large number of plants which opened their flowers each at a given time, so that they revealed at a glance to the great master the hour of the day. As every bird has its hour when it awakes and sends up its hymn of praise to its Maker, so every flower also has its time. I cannot here construct for my readers a floral clock, although they will be able to see what flowers can be so employed by consulting the works named in the notes; but it is easy to indicate the hour at which some of the commonest of our wild and cultivated flowers come into bloom. Some of these have so impressed men with their peculiar habit, that they have gained for themselves a name which indicates the exact hour or period at which they open their petals or hide their pretty faces. Some flowers open every morning and close at night, irrespective of the weather, others will only open when the sun shines, while others again come forth at night, or close their petals at midday if the sun is fierce and bright. The degree of light they require seems to determine the hour

of the day at which they will unfold their beauty. The Daisy, for instance, like a true "day's eye," opens its white and crimson-tipped star to the early beams of the rising sun. The Morning-glory closes its sweet-scented flowers before the sun has risen high. The Dandelion opens between six and seven o'clock, and possesses a very peculiar means of sheltering itself from the heat of the sun, as it closes entirely whenever the warmth becomes excessive. The stalks of the down in the Dandelion contract closely together in moist and wet weather—a beautiful provision to secure its dispersion only on a dry day, when it is driven off by every zephyr. The school-boy often gathers the ripe stalk, and blows at the crown which contains the seeds attached to a coronet of delicate hairs, in order that he may learn the hour of the day.

"Dandelion, with globe of down,
The school-boy's clock in every town,
Which the truant puffs amain
To conjure lost hours back again."

DANDELION (*Leontodon Taraxacum*)
a, plant; *b*, blossom; *c*, *d*, fruit.

The Anemone is another of nature's own barometers; for at the approach of rain, or nightfall, it curls its petals up and goes to sleep. Our forefathers asserted that this was the work of the fairy who nestled inside the tent of fair leaves, while it drew the curtains close around it, just as it was wont to run

up the stem and nestle quietly in the flowers of the Cowslip, or "Fairy Cup." More reliance is often placed in the forecastings of flowers and plants by our rural population, than in the various scientific appliances which have of late years been so abundantly invented. Perhaps there is no common flower which has gathered around it a greater degree of such confidence or a larger amount of weather-lore than the tiny scarlet Pimpernel. Its pretty, modest flower attracts attention involuntarily, and a little observation will show us how justly it merits the local names by which it is known. From its habit of closing its blossoms about two o'clock it has gained the name of Shepherds' Clock, a name which is also applied to the Goat's Beard. Some call it also John-go-to-bed-at-noon, for the same reason. According to a well-known proverb—

> "No ear hath heard, no tongue can tell,
> The virtues of the Pimpernel;"

for it was not only used as a charm against witchcraft, but old Gerarde tells us that in his day country-people prognosticated fine or wet weather by noticing in the morning whether the flowers of the plant were open or closed. On account of its delicate sense of perceiving the proximity of a shower, and closing its petals before one comes, the Pimpernel has gained for itself the name of Poor-man's Weather-glass, or Shepherd's Weather-glass. The following lines from the "Botanical Looker-out" (p. 168) are too sweet and apposite to be passed by:—

> "Come, tell me, thou coy little flower,
> Converging thy petals again,
> Who gave thee the magical power
> Of shutting thy cup on the rain?
> While many a beautiful bow'r
> Is drenched in nectareous dew,

Seal'd up is your scarlet-tinged flower,
And the rain peals in vain upon you.

"The Cowslip and Primrose can sip
The pure mountain dew as it flows;
But you, ere it touches your lips
Coyly raise your red petals and close;
The Rose and the Sweet-briar drink
With pleasure the stores of the sky;
And why should your modesty shrink
From a drop in that little pink eye?"

Whatever the barometer may indicate, if the Red Pimpernel has its flowers expanded fully in the morning, there will, to a certainty, be no rain of any consequence on that day, and umbrella and macintosh may be laid aside. But although the Pimpernel is more sensitive in this respect than many other English flowers, it is not by any means the only one that possesses these peculiarities. Lord Bacon, who was remarkably attentive to all the appearances and changes of natural objects, says respecting the Chickweed (which has, however, in some cases been confused with the Pimpernel), that when the flower expands boldly and fully, no rain will happen for four hours or upwards; if it continues in that open state, no rain will disturb the summer's day; but if it entirely shuts up or veils the white flower with its green mantle, let the traveller put on his great-coat, and the plough-man, with his beast of draught, expect rest from their labour. If the flowers of the Siberian Sow-thistle keep open all night, rain will certainly fall next day, say the weather-wise. The different species of Trefoil or Clover-grass always contract their leaves at the approach of a storm; in consequence of which these plants have been termed the "husbandman's barometer." It used to be said that the leaves felt rough to the touch when stormy and tempestuous weather was at hand; and it was even asserted that they would "start and rise up, as if afraid of an assault."

If the African Marigold does not open its flowers in the morning about seven o'clock, says an old writer, you may be sure it will rain that day, unless it thunders.

Mr. Willsford tells us that Heliotropes and Marigolds "do not only presage stormy weather, by closing or contracting together their leaves, but turn towards the sun's rays all the day, and in the evening shut up shop." With reference to this we have more than one plant named Turn-sole, or Heliotrope. It has been remarked of the Sun-flower, and other plants whose flowers are compound and yellow, in shape and appearance like the orb of day, that during the whole day they turn their flowers towards the sun—viz., to the east in the morning, to the south at noon, and to the west towards evening. This, it is said, is very observable in the Sow-thistle (*Sonchus arvensis*); and in old works the Wartwort was also called Turn-sole from its being supposed to enjoy the privilege of always gazing in old Sol's bright face, and turning a wistful glance towards him as he scampers across the celestial plains. Shakspere tells us of

> "The Marigold that goes to bed with the sun,
> And with him rises weeping;"

and in old dictionaries this flower is called a Heliotrope, and described as following the sun. It was its attribute of opening and shutting at the sun's bidding which made this flower such a favourite with the old writers, especially those who wrote on religious emblems. "It was to them" (says Rev. H. Ellacombe) "the emblem of constancy in affection, and sympathy in joy and sorrow, though it was also the emblem of the fawning courtier, who can only shine when everything is bright. As the emblem of constancy, it was to the old writers what the Sunflower was to Moore.

> "'The Sunflower turns on her god when he sets
> The same look which she did when he rose.'"

"It was the Heliotrope, or Solsequium, or Turnesol of our forefathers, and is the flower often alluded to under that name." St. Frances de Sales remarks that "all yellow flowers, and above all those that the Greeks call Heliotrope, and we call Sunflower, not only rejoice at the sight of the sun, but follow with loving fidelity the attraction of its rays, gazing at the sun, and turning towards it from its rising to its setting. Linnæus quotes a similar piece of weather-lore in connection with the Wild Mignonette. Withers, a contemporary of Shakspere's later life, thus writes:

"When with a serious musing I behold
The grateful and obsequious Marigold
How duly every morning she displays
Her open breast when Phœbus spreads his rays;
How she observes him in his daily walk,
Still bending towards him her small slender stalk;
How, when he down declines, she droops and mourns,
Bedewed, as 'twere, with tears till he returns;
And how she veils her flowers when he is gone:
When this I meditate, methinks the flowers
Have spirits far more generous than ours."

One more note on this plant may be made in passing. In the chancel of Berry Narbor Church, Devonshire, the following epitaph, containing a quaint allusion to the old idea respecting the Marigold, may still be seen:—

"Dedicated to the Pretious Memorie of Mary ye deare and only daughter of George Westwood, Pastor of this Church and of Frances his wife; who, leaving this vale of miserie for a mansion in Felicitie we heer entered—Januar. 31. Anno Domini. 1648. Œtat suæ 7.

"This Mary-gold lo! here doth shew
Marie worth gold lies near below;
Cut doune by death, ye fair'st-gilt flour
Flourish and fade doth in an hour.
The Mary-gold in sunshine spread
When cloudie clos'd doth bow the head,
This orient plant retains its guise
With splendent Sol to set and rise—
Ev'n so this Virgin Marie Rose,
In life soon nipt, in death fresh grows."

Coles tells us, in his "Knowledge of Plants," that if the down flies off Coltsfoot, Dandelion, or Thistles, when there is no wind, it is a certain sign of rain. It used to be common among our poorer people in former times to gather the Fuller's Teazle, and hang it up in their cottages under the superstitious notion that when a change of weather was at hand it would alter its appearance. The flowers of the plant called Chick-wintergreen or Winter-green Chickweed is said to droop in the night, lest rain or moisture should injure the fertilizing pollen. One kind of wood-sorrel shuts up or doubles its leaves before storms and tempests, but in a serene sky expands or unfolds them, so that husbandmen study its appearance in order to foretell the approach of a storm. The same plant also compresses each triplet of leaves closely together at the first indication of evening damp, a peculiarity we have observed also in the Sensitive Plant.[2]

It was customary in the seventeenth century to set fire to growing ferns, under the belief that this practice would produce rain. There can be little doubt that the custom of "firing" the bracken which grows in such quantities on the Devonshire moors, originated in this practice; but whether the results anticipated always follow or not, we do not know a prettier sight than that of the fern-fires dotting the moors late on a summer's evening, and lighting up the country round with their radiant glow. To a stranger these sights will at first occasion alarm; and, when I first saw them, vivid recollections of raging conflagrations in Eastern cities rushed to my mind, and filled me with fear and anxiety, till I knew that there was no danger to property or life. A curious illustration of the old belief is furnished by an official letter from the Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, admonishing the High Sheriff of Staffordshire to forbear for awhile the burning of ferns during the visit to that county of King Charles I., as His Majesty, who had a right

to ask for royal weather, is "desirous that the country and himself may enjoy fair weather as long as he remains in those parts."

Many are the plants which were either used to ward off the evil effects of the thunderstorm, or were believed to be specially free from danger of bad results at such times. Some trees and plants, however, were peculiarly liable to the stroke of the electric current. In illustration of these statements we find that in Eastern Prussia wreaths of Chamomile-flowers are hung up in the houses on St. John's Day as a preservative against storms. The Houseleek preserves the house on which it grows from lightning, and is known in some places as Thunder-beard. One may safely shelter under the Elder-tree, for the lightning never, according to popular superstition, strikes it, since the cross was made of its wood. As Jupiter had a special regard for the Bay, it was regarded as a protection against thunder; and as it resisted lightning, Tiberius is said to have shaded his head with branches of that tree during the raging of a storm. Sir Thomas Browne speaks of it as "protecting from the mischief of thunder and lightning, a quality common with the Fig-tree, eagle, and skin of a seal." In Devonshire I find that many people still regard the Elm as enjoying the same immunity from danger. I have already given many illustrations of this subject in the foregoing chapters, and shall therefore endeavour not to repeat what I have there said. Opinions are somewhat conflicting respecting the Oak. By some it was believed that the elements respected it, and that the lightning would never burn it. Some even asserted that the Oak, as being Jupiter's special tree, would not be struck by the storm, and accordingly the saying went :—

> "Strike Elm, strike Rowan,
> Not the Oak."

But a more common saying contradicts this, and says:

"Beware of an Oak,
It draws the Stroke."

I have already referred to the proverbs which teach us how a future hard winter is indicated by the abundant crop of wild fruits which the kind Being in heaven has been preparing for the use of the fowls of the air when their other provisions fail. Lord Bacon says that wet summers are generally attended with an uncommon quantity of seeds on the White-thorn and Dog-rose, and their unusual fruitfulness is a sign of a severe winter. The winter of 1881 was in itself sufficient to disprove this, for a larger crop of such fruits and a milder winter surely never went hand in hand before. The Cornishman says—

"Many Slones, many groans;"

and others have it thus—

"Many Sloes, many cold toes;"

while the Scotchman will put it—

"A Haw year, a snaw year."

The Scotch also regard the appearance of an abundance of blossom on Broom and Furze, or Whin, as indicative of a good crop; while many held that the blossom on Turnips going to seed prognosticated the same event. The prevalence of berries on Holly-bushes is generally supposed to indicate a cold winter, and in most country places still you will be reminded that if the Oak bear many acorns or masts, it foreshows a long and hard winter. A good nut year is regarded by many farmers as a favourable omen; and if at the fall of the leaf in October many of the bunches hang withering on the boughs, instead of falling off, it betokens a frosty winter and much snow. Farmers frequently used to arrange their planting, sowing, and other

agricultural operations by the order observed by certain plants and trees in coming into leaf, or similar natural phenomena. Between the Oak and the Ash a species of rivalry for the pre-eminence has been maintained from a very early period to the present, when, if more serious omens are no longer afforded by them, it is still possible, as those who are learned in weather signs assert, to predict much from the tree which first unfolds her leaves.

"If the Oak's before the Ash,
Then you may expect a splash;
But if the Ash is 'fore the Oak,
Then you must beware a soak."

The Kentish people, however, cannot afford to waste their words after this fashion. When they are speaking in spring-time of the two trees coming into leaf they express their sentiment in four brief words:

"Oak, smoke; Ash, squash."

It is believed that if the Oak is the first to burst into leaf, the summer will be a hot one; if the Ash, the season will be wet. In Gloucestershire it is a common saying that after the Mulberry-tree has put forth her green leaf there will be no more frost. An old proverb reminds us that—

"March dry, good Rye;
April wet, good Wheat."

This bears some resemblance to the Scotch saying, the following rhyme being common still among the peasantry north of the Tweed:

"Mony rains, mony Rowans;
Mony Rowans, mony Yewns."

By Yewns we are to understand the light grain which the farmer

finds such a source of anxiety to him in a bad season. Everyone knows that the Rowans are the bright scarlet berries of the Mountain-ash or Rowan-tree, around which so much folk-lore has gathered. The berries are never ripe before harvest; and it is to this day a common saying that many of them follow a wet season. The blossoming of the Bramble early in June is taken by many as an indication of an early harvest. The leafing of the Elm was formerly made to regulate field operations in some places. The rhyme says:

> "When the Elmen leaf is as big as a mouse's ear,
> Then to sow Barley never fear;
> When the Elmen leaf is as big as an ox's eye,
> Then say I 'Hie! boys, hie!'"

The farm-labourer in Suffolk will tell you that if you

> "Cut your thistles before St. John,
> You will have two instead of one."

If spring-flowers blossom in autumn they portend death; and if Roses and Violets are plentiful at that season some epidemic may be expected. The Daisy comes into notice in the saying that it is not spring till you can put your foot on twelve of those flowers. The most careless observer of plants cannot fail to have been struck by the fact that the Daisy not only closes its petals at night, but that they are also carefully folded over the yellow disc in rainy weather. It has thus the power of preserving the parts which are needful for fructification from the rains of the day and the dews of the night. In fact, the study of the structure and habits of this commonest of English flowers is calculated to fill the mind with wonder and admiration. But may not the same be said of all God's works? When we consider them, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visitest him?"

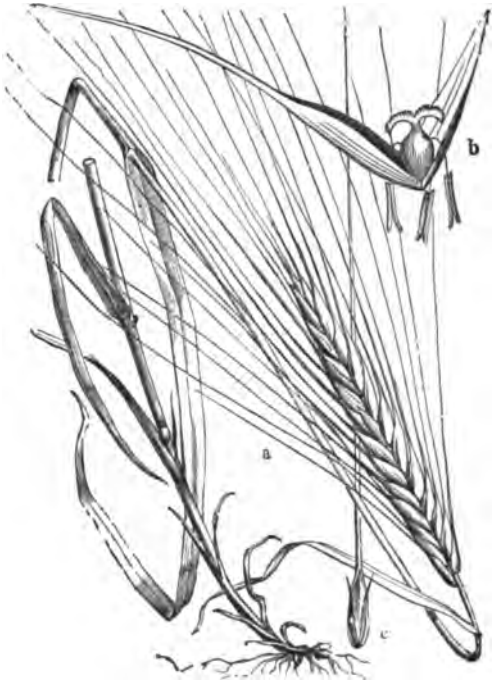
On the Continent, the Carline Thistle, a kind of Immortelle, is frequently fastened against the doors of the cottagers to indicate the state of the weather, which it does by always closing up before rain. In the same way our own peasantry employ bits of sea-weed, which become moist and watery on the approach of a storm or in damp weather. Years ago the timber buyers in London used to abstain from felling Oak-trees when the wind was in the east, it being superstitiously believed that the bark would be difficult to strip off if the trees were cut down at such a time. Urgent business and other things seem to be fast driving such notions out of the country, for the Devonshire people are generally regarded as being the last to hold to an old tradition; yet I had a striking proof the other day that here the notion does not now prevail. We were running along the valley of the Teign one evening in April by rail, and observed a number of trees lying by the sides of the fields. The farmers remarked that the "ripping" had been unusually free and good this spring, yet strange to say for nearly a fortnight east winds had prevailed! Thus many of our old superstitions are one by one receiving their death-blow. There is a rhyme respecting the Wind-flower, describing it as the

> "Coy Anemone, that ne'er uncloses
> Her lips until they're blown on by the wind."

The saying is that it received its name from this fact, that until the winds of March began to blow the flower refused to open its petals.[3]

I have already alluded to the cuckoo more than once, but have not exhausted the lore which connects its name with flowers and showers. Hesiod tells us that "If it should happen to rain three days together, when the cuckoo sings among the Oak-trees, then late sowing will be as good as early sowing." When the cuckoo appeared in Egypt it was the time for Wheat and Barley harvest.

Mr. Hardy has written a popular history of the cuckoo, from which we are able to glean some interesting facts. As the cuckoo only returns to our shores at a certain time, it has been customary to predict, from his appearance, what kind of season will follow; and farmers have in all ages placed great reliance on omens of weather and crops drawn from this source. A hundred years ago a Norwich farmer wrote that "The present appearance for the greatest appearance of Barley is from the seed sown on the earliest sound of the cuckoo, and while the buds of Blackthorn were yet turgid, than what was delayed to the frequent note of the former, and the expansion of bloom in the latter." It was once a custom among farmers in the southern counties of Scotland never to sow their Peas till the swallows made their appearance. Pliny says that vine-dressers were anciently called cuckoos; *i.e.*, slothful, because they deferred cutting their vines till that bird began to sing, which was later than the right time. In Berwickshire those Oats which are sown after the 1st of April are called Gowk's Oats, or Cuckoo's Oats; so that if the March weather



BARLEY (*Hordeum vulgare*).
b, blossom; *c*, fruit and grain.

admits of the farm work being got forward it is remarked that "there will be no Gowk Oats this year." The following proverb is much used in some places:—

> "Cuckoo Oats and Woodcock Hay
> Make a farmer run away."

By this we are to understand that if the spring is so backward that the Oats cannot be sown till the cuckoo is heard, or the autumn so wet that the hay cannot be gathered in till the woodcocks come over, the farmer is sure to suffer great loss. So much for her coming, and bringing the delights of spring in her train.

> "She sucks the sweet flowers to make her voice clear,
> That she may sing 'cuckoo' three months of the year."

We have also some indication of the season, and the state of the flowers when she leaves us again for sunnier climes:—

> "Nor does she cease
> Her changeless note, until the Broom, full blown,
> Gives warning that her time for flight has come."

Besides affording prognostics of weather, many plants fold themselves up at particular hours, with such regularity as to have acquired names from this property. The following are some of the more remarkable plants of this description, and others will be found referred to in the chapter on Flowers and the Seasons. There is the Goat's-beard, which Gerarde thus describes:—"The floures grow at the top of the stalkes, consisting of a number of purple leaves, dasht over as it were with a little yellow dust, set about with nine or ten sharpe pointed greene leaves; the whole floure resembles a star when it is spred abroad; for it shutteth itselfe at twelve of the clocke, and sheweth not his face open untill the next dayes sun doth make it floure anew, whereupon it was called

Go-to-bed-at-noon: when these floures be come to their full maturitie and ripeness, they grow into a *downy blow-ball*, like those of Dandelion, which is carried away with the winde." Ben Jonson says:

> "Her treading would not bend a blade of grass,
> Or shake the *downy blow-ball* from his stalk."

Speaking of the peculiar habit of some plants, M. S. de Vere says: "Others love late hours; the Evening Primrose opens its golden eyes in the sweet hour of eve, and retires before the returning glare of day. The brilliant White Lotus, opening when the sun rises, and closing when he sets, still loves shade so well, that, when it has no shelter to screen itself, it folds up its pure leaves as soon as the sun reaches the zenith, as though unable to endure the too ardent rays of the luminary that called it into life. There are, on the other hand, also, bats and owls found among plants, wide-awake all night long. The Convolvulus of the tropics blooms only at night, and so does that magnificent Cactus, the large flowered Torch-thistle. Late in the silent night, when all other flowers are sleeping, this strange plant, with its dry, bare stem, unfolds its gorgeous, vanilla-scented leaves." The Four-o'clock (*Mirabilis*), which grows in the Malay Archipelago, and is there frequently known as Princess'-leaf, is a beautiful plant in its native climes. It has gained its name from the peculiar habit of opening its flowers at four o'clock in the evening and keeping them open till the early morning. This plant is sometimes taken from the woods and placed in a conspicuous place in the gardens of the natives, that it may answer the purpose of a dial or clock, especially in cloudy weather, when observations cannot be taken by the sun, upon which people destitute of watches and clocks very largely depend. The Evening Primrose is well known from its regularly opening about the time of sunset, and shutting again with

a loud popping noise about sunrise. After six o'clock these flowers regularly report the approach of night. The Tamarind-tree, the Water-lily, *Victoria regia*, and many others expand their petals during the night; and there is a species of Aloes which gradually opens its flowers about five o'clock in the evening, and, when fully expanded, they droop and die. Several species of the Cereus are nocturnal flowers, but I have already spoken of the finest of these.

Many other plants are known to undergo curious changes at particular periods of the day or night, or under the influence of the weather, but to write of these is not my work except in so far as they might be associated with popular superstitions or mythic ideas. Dr. Cooke's interesting work on the "Freaks and Marvels of Plant Life" exactly fills up this place. I will refer to one of these plants, because its name lends itself to the imagination, and leads us to suspect that on the plains of Tartary, where it grows, the "Wind-witch" has some curious stories attached to it. This is a kind of Thistle, and grows to such a size as to be capable of affording shelter to the huts and hovels temporarily erected in the distant Russian steppes. Professor Schleiden, who explored these regions, tells us that in autumn the stem of the thistle rots off, and the globe of branches dries up into a ball, which becomes as light as a feather, and is driven over the steppes by the autumnal winds, which lift it high in the air. Numbers of such balls often fly at once over the plain with such rapidity that no horseman can catch them; now hopping with short, quick springs along the ground, onward in a spirit-like dance over the turf, now caught by an eddy, rising suddenly a hundred feet in the air. Often one Wind-witch hangs on to another, and others soon join the company; while the gigantic yet airy mass rolls away before the piping east wind. It is in this way that in the East, where nature has been so lavish and bounteous, one often witnesses sights that perfectly astound the sober English-

man, who has been used to the dwarfed and stunted vegetation of these colder climes all his life. But I think, nevertheless, that we have now learned enough to assure us that if we cannot do things on so large a scale as they do in tropical countries (not that Tartary is one of these), we can at any rate find as much to interest and instruct us in our humbler plants at home as any one could possibly desire; and there is little danger of our ever exhausting the wonders which are associated with even our most modest of flowers.